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# The University of Minnesota

STUDIES IN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

NUMBER 1

## AN INQUIRY INTO THE COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF LUDUS COVENTRIAE

BY

ESTHER L. SWENSON, M.A.

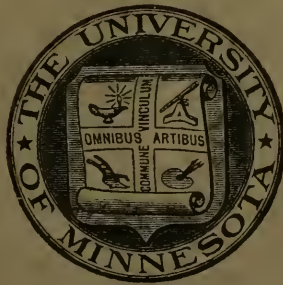
Sometime Assistant in English in the University of Minnesota

## WITH A NOTE ON THE HOME OF LUDUS COVENTRIAE

BY

HARDIN CRAIG, Ph.D.

Professor of English in the University of Minnesota



MINNEAPOLIS

Bulletin of the University of Minnesota

October 1914

Monograph

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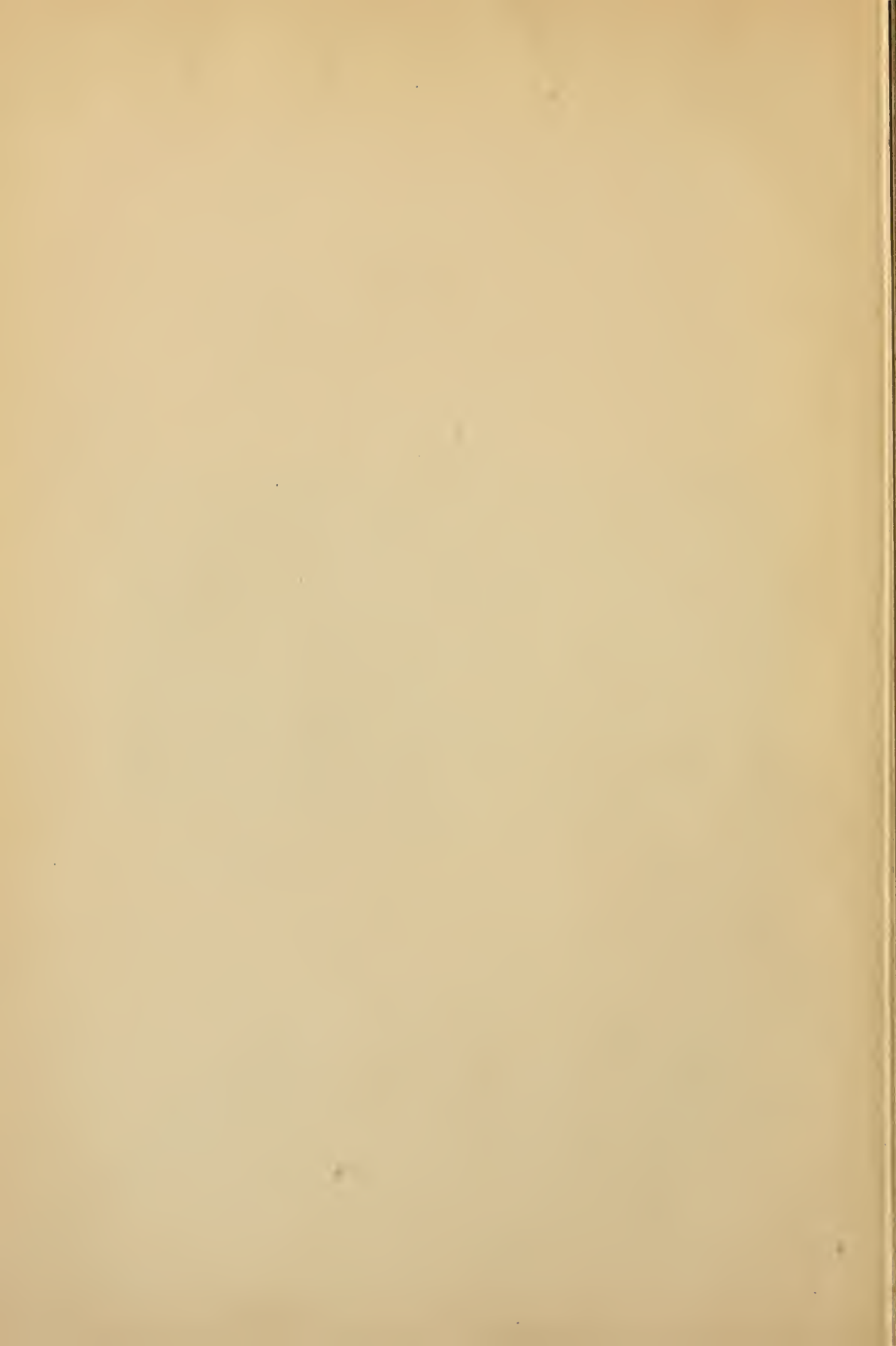
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## PREFACE

During the year which has elapsed since my preparation of the *Note on the Home of Ludus Coventriae* it has been possible for me to collect further information from Lincoln records with regard to the Lincoln plays. This I shall publish when opportunity offers. The paper printed here will, as it stands, have value as a statement of the problem of the location of *Ludus Coventriae* and as an explanation of the issues involved, so far as they are capable of explanation in the light of the materials already available in print. Another matter connected with this publication which demands some explanation is that Miss Swenson's *Inquiry into the Composition and Structure of Ludus Coventriae* was already out of her hands when Miss M. H. Dodds' paper, entitled *The Problem of Ludus Coventriae*, appeared in the January number of the *Modern Language Review*. Miss Swenson did not, therefore, have opportunity, in the preparation of her thesis, to consult Miss Dodds' article. I have made it the subject of a few comments at the end of my *Note* on pages 81-83 below.

HARDIN CRAIG.

October 1, 1914.



# AN INQUIRY INTO THE COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF LUDUS COVENTRIAE

## INTRODUCTION

The question of the locality to which the so-called *Ludus Coventriae* ought to be assigned has long been debated. In the year 1841 Halliwell edited the plays for the Shakespeare Society under the following title: "Ludus Coventriae: A Collection of Mysteries formerly represented at Coventry on the Feast of Corpus Christi." His principal authority for assigning the cycle to Coventry is a note written on the flyleaf of the manuscript by Dr. James, who was librarian to Sir Robert Cotton, the last private owner of the manuscript: "Contenta Novi Testamenti scenice expressa et actitata olim per monachos sive fratres mendicantes: vulgo dicitur hic liber Ludus Coventriae, sive Ludus Corporis Christi." Later Dugdale in his *History of Warwickshire*, written in the middle of the seventeenth century, states, probably only on the authority of James, that these plays were presented by the Grey Friars at Coventry. And so for a time scholars seem to have taken it for granted that the cycle belonged to the town of Coventry.

With the advent of modern critical methods, however, scholars have begun to inquire into the authority upon which James based his assertion, and have found that it rests on no reliable ground. It will be noted, first, that James does not state positively that these were Coventry plays, but simply that they were commonly so called; and, secondly, that, in describing the cycle as made up of plays dealing with subjects from the New Testament, James shows that he is unfamiliar with their contents. There were, however, craft-plays at Coventry that contained only New Testament material, and it seems possible that James confused them with the *Ludus Coventriae*. On the first page of the manuscript the plays are entitled simply, "The plaie called Corpus Christi," no mention being made of their location. The inscription is written in a later hand, probably early in the sixteenth century.

Attention has often been called to the last four lines of the Prologue:

A Sunday next, yf that we may,  
At vi of the belle we gynne oure play,  
In N. towne, wherfore we pray  
That God now be youre spede, Amen.

They have been thought to indicate that the plays were performed by a company of strolling players, the 'N' of 'N. towne' standing for *nomen*.

Ten Brink and Pollard accept this interpretation and also point out that the dialect indicates a North-East Midland origin for the cycle.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hohlfeld suggests that the plays might originally have been presented by the Grey Friars at Coventry, and later, when the craft-plays of Coventry had robbed the Friars of their popularity, the cycle might have been taken over by a strolling company.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Chambers, on the other hand, does not consider it necessary to conclude that the 'N' of 'N. towne' indicates *nomen* and consequently a band of strolling players. He suggests that it may stand for Norwich or some other North-East Midland town beginning with 'N.'<sup>3</sup> Mr. Gayley, being impressed with the large number of plays in the cycle dealing with the life of the Virgin, suggests Lincoln as their possible location; for in the Lincoln craft-plays there was always ecclesiastical coöperation, and especial emphasis was laid upon the legends of the Virgin.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Gayley also calls attention to the similarity of the Old Testament plays in the *Ludus Coventriae* to those in the Chester cycle and also to the *Viel Testament* and suggests that all three of the cycles spring from a common French source, located in time between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries.<sup>5</sup>

These proposals are, however, not in any case sufficiently substantiated and seem to be little more than guesses. The history of the manuscript is shrouded in mystery, and so far examination of town records and other external evidence has yielded no great positive results. It seems worth while to turn to an examination of the cycle itself, its language, composition, style, etc., with the hope that an investigation of internal evidence may prove more successful.

Mr. M. Kramer in his treatise called *Sprache und Heimat des sogen. Ludus Coventriae* has made a study of the linguistic peculiarities of the cycle and arrives at the conclusion that there underlies the cycle, as it now stands, an older "kernel cycle." This basal cycle, he believes, originated in the southern part of England near the border between the South and the East Midlands, possibly in Wiltshire, but that the old original cycle has been further developed and revised in the North-East Midlands; he thus partially supports Ten Brink's assertion.

The composite nature of the cycle which seems to indicate that the play is made up of various parts of cycles, originally not connected, as here recognized by Kramer, has been pointed out by many other scholars. Creizenach and Ten Brink both call attention to Prologue material in the

<sup>1</sup> Ten Brink, *History of English Literature*, ii. p. 283; Pollard, *English Miracle Plays*, xxxvii.

<sup>2</sup> A. R. Hohlfeld, *Die altenglischen Kollektivmysterien*, in *Anglia*, xi.

<sup>3</sup> E. K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, ii. p. 421.

<sup>4</sup> C. M. Gayley, *Plays of Our Forefathers*, p. 136.

<sup>5</sup> Gayley, pp. 325, 326. For a further discussion of the sources of this cycle, cf. Falke, *Die Quellen des sog. Ludus Coventriae*.



Nativity and Passion groups of plays which marks off separate units.<sup>6</sup> And Collier expresses the opinion that *Contemplacio* was introduced after the first production.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Davidson in his *Studies in the English Mystery Plays*<sup>8</sup> suggests that these materials, which sprang from various sources, were recast into cyclic form by one writer at a late date, probably early in the sixteenth century. The sixteenth century, however, is too late, since the manuscript is generally thought to have been written in the year 1468. Moreover, the metrical arrangement of the plays, as I hope to show later, does not indicate that the whole cycle has been rewritten at one time and by one hand. It may, however, be very possible that considerable portions of the cycle, such as the ecclesiastical parts of the Nativity plays, are the work of one author. Mr. Chambers<sup>9</sup> cites a rumor that Lydgate of Bury was such an author; and Mr. Hemingway in his *English Nativity Plays*<sup>10</sup> gives a number of arguments in favor of such a conjecture.

In the book mentioned above Mr. Hemingway has made a comparative study of the Nativity plays in the four cycles, together with an inquiry into their origin and sources. He has printed from *Ludus Coventriae* five plays, The Salutation, Joseph's Trouble about Mary, The Visit to Elizabeth, The Nativity [Joseph and the Midwives], and the play of the Shepherds. As a result of his study of these plays, he finds that the ecclesiastical portions, notably the Dispute of the Four Daughters of God in the play of the Salutation, were omitted from the Prologue; and that the action of the plays would not be seriously affected if these parts were omitted. He concludes that the original plays did not contain the theological elements, but were like the other English plays and possibly written originally for trading companies.<sup>11</sup> It has occurred to me that a comparison of the general Prologue and the individual plays throughout the cycle might help to determine the structure and composition of the cycle. In connection with this comparison, I have also made a study of the manuscript, the metrical arrangement, and the stage-directions with a view to distinguishing between older and newer elements in the plays.

The manuscript of *Ludus Coventriae* is found in the British Museum, Cotton MS. Vespasian D. viii. It is generally thought to have been written in the year 1468, since that date is written on the verso of fol. 100, and is apparently in the hand of the scribe. In addition to Dr. James's note, quoted above, the name of Robert Hegge, Dunelmensis, occurs at the beginning of the manuscript and is followed by the title, "The plaie called Corpus Christi," written in a later hand, which Mr. Hemingway asserts to be the hand of

<sup>6</sup> W. Creizenach, *Geschichte des neueren Dramas*, i. 300; Ten Brink, i. pt. ii. 283.

<sup>7</sup> J. P. Collier, *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, ii. 160.

<sup>8</sup> Doct. Diss. Yale, 1892.

<sup>9</sup> Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, ii. 145.

<sup>10</sup> S. B. Hemingway, *English Nativity Plays*, xxxvii.

<sup>11</sup> Hemingway, *English Nativity Plays*, xxxii.

Robert Hegge. Hegge has written his name in a number of places on the manuscript and other names also occur; written in the margins and on blank pages, John Holland, John King, William Dere, and John Taylphott. The places where these names occur are indicated below in the discussion of the various plays.

The absence of guild names or of clear divisions between plays in the manuscript has led scholars to suppose that the plays were not performed by craft-guilds. But the fact that numbers are written in the margins and elsewhere to mark off the various plays may indicate that at some time in the history of the cycle an attempt was made to divide the cycle up into separate plays and to hold various crafts responsible for each part. The numbering of these plays is in a hand contemporary with that of the scribe, and is done at the same time as the marginal paragraph marks and the large initial letters. The numbering and rubrications run straight through and include the Assumption play, although this is written in a different hand. Whether or not the numbering was done by the scribe who wrote the body of the manuscript, it is certainly true that the numbering must have been done on a later occasion, namely at the time of the incorporation of the Assumption play.

In the following discussion I have adhered to the divisions as marked in the manuscript and not as they have been reproduced by Halliwell in his edition. Wherever there is any disagreement between Halliwell and the manuscript, and this occurs mainly in the part of the cycle dealing with the Passion, I have found that the manuscript divisions correspond better with the Prologue than Halliwell's do. In the table of comparison between the Prologue and the plays I have indicated Halliwell's divisions in the right-hand margin with arabic numerals in parentheses.

A study of the metrical arrangement of the cycle reveals the fact that there are, belonging to the original cycle, five types of stanza that seem to be basic forms, as follows: (1) A thirteen-line stanza rhyming a b a b a b a b c d d d c. The first eight lines have generally four accented syllables, and the ninth and thirteenth lines vary from one to three. This type is used throughout the Prologue and the first part of the cycle. (2) A linked ballad stanza a a a b c c c b, of which lines one to three and five to seven are tetrameter lines, and lines four and eight, trimeter lines. (3) The third type of stanza is the four-foot quatrain. In the first half of the cycle double quatrains, a b a b b c b c, predominate, and in the second half the single quatrains seem to be preferred. (4) Couplets are used here and there in the latter part of the cycle, but never to any great extent. (5) The second part of the play of Joseph's Trouble about Mary and the Purification play employ a stanza that does not appear elsewhere in the cycle, a a b a a b b c b c. The lines vary in length from three to four feet, but are generally four feet long. In addition to these five forms there is considerable use made of the



tumbling meter with various rhyming schemes, a form of verse which I believe may be mainly the work of a redactor. The interweaving of these various stanzas is indicated in the discussion of the individual plays and also summarized in a table at the end.<sup>12</sup>

For convenience of treatment I have divided the cycle into four groups. It is not meant that these groups indicate anything very definite as to the structure of the cycle.

GROUP I

- |                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| i. Fall of Lucifer | iii. Cain and Abel     |
| ii. Fall of Man    | iv. Noah and the Flood |
|                    | v. Abraham's Sacrifice |

PROLOGUE

PLAYS

*The Fall of Lucifer*

(Including the first 82 lines of Halliwell's *Creation*)

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| i.                                 | i. God makes an introductory speech, in which he speaks of himself as "alpha et ω," one God in three persons, etc. (1)  |
| Creation of heaven and the angels. | In the 29th line of this speech he says, "Now wole I begynne my werke to make," and then goes on to tell how he creates heaven with the stars and the angels. |
| The angels worship God.            | The angels sing, "Tibi omnes Angeli."   |
| Rebellion and fall of Lucifer.     | Lucifer rebels and is expelled from heaven by God. He laments, but says nothing of plans for revenge.   |

*The Fall of Man*

(Including the rest of Halliwell's *Creation* as well as his *Fall of Man*)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ii. The other six days of creation.                    | ii. God goes on in his speech to describe the work of the other six days of creation.  |
| The creation of Adam and Eve, the garden, the command. | The creation of Adam and Eve on the sixth day. They are placed in paradise and given the command concerning the tree of knowledge. |
|  | God rests on the seventh day, blesses his work, goes to heaven.  |
|  | Adam and Eve express gratitude. (2)  |
| The temptation and fall.                               | The temptation and fall.   |
|  | God visits the garden, calls Adam, Eve, and the Serpent to account. The Serpent gives jealousy of man as a reason for his deed.    |
| Expulsion from garden, angel left to guard the gates.  | Condemnation and expulsion, angels left to guard the gates.  |
|  | Adam and Eve lament.   |

<sup>12</sup> Davidson, *English Mystery Plays*, and Hohlfeld, *Anglia*, xi, have treated the question of the meters of this cycle, but only incidentally.

*Cain and Abel*

- iii. Cain and Abel ask Adam's advice as to the best mode of worship. (3)  
 They select the offering. Abel chooses his best sheep, Cain considers it foolish to give the best to God, who does not use it. Abel remonstrates, but to no purpose.  
 Cain and Abel offer sacrifices. The sacrifice. Abel's sacrifice burns, while Cain's does not. Abel explains this as betokening God's approval of his selection of the best.  
 Cain slays Abel. Cain slays Abel.  
 God's curse upon Cain. God's curse upon Cain. Cain's lament.

*Noah and the Flood*

- iv. Noah and his family, in turn, pray for deliverance from sin. Noah announces himself the second progenitor of the human race. (4)  
 God resolves to destroy man.  
 God is angry with man. An angel delivers the command to Noah to build the Ark. Noah hesitates; he is too old (five hundred years) to undertake such a task; but the angel reassures him.  
 God sends an angel to command Noah to build an ark, etc. Noah and his family go to the sea.  
 The Lamech episode. Blind Lamech, walking with a youth, boasts of his skill in archery. The youth sets a mark for him; Lamech inadvertently slays Cain. In anger, he also kills the youth, and then goes to hide.  
 Noah returns with his family; they sing, lamenting the flood.  
 After forty days, Noah sends out a crow. When forty days have passed Noah sends out a crow.  
 Later a dove, that brought good tidings. Later he sends out a dove, which returns carrying an olive leaf.  
 They sing, "Mare vidit et fugit."

*Abraham's Sacrifice*

- v. Abraham praises God, exhorts his son to honor God. (5)  
 Abraham goes for a walk, and an angel meets him, gives him the command.  
 Abraham receives the command to sacrifice Isaac.  
 Abraham is willing to do God's bidding. Abraham takes Isaac with him and goes forth to the sacrifice. He tells Isaac of God's command. Isaac comforts his father.  
 But is prevented by an angel. Angel prevents the slaying of Isaac.  
 Angel promises that Abraham's seed shall be as the stars, etc.  
 Abraham and Isaac worship.

This group of plays contains none of the elaborations of the scripture story, such as the long dialogue between Abraham and Isaac at the time of the sacrifice; nor any unscriptural humorous elements, such as the shrewishness of Noah's wife, which are found in the York, Towneley, and Chester cycles. Considered as a whole, these Old Testament plays are extremely simple, almost direct paraphrases of the Bible stories. It is probably for this reason that Mr. Gayley considers this part of the so-called *Ludus Coventriae* older than the other cycles.<sup>13</sup> With one notable exception there is in this part of the cycle a close correspondence between Prologue and plays. Such minor differences as, for instance, (1) Cain's grumbling at giving God the best of his fruits, (2) Noah's long prayer and his proclaiming himself the second father of mankind, (3) the Angel's promise to Abraham that his seed should be as the stars, are, I believe, simply elaborations of the themes given in the Prologue and therefore negligible. The first of these occurs in the Towneley play.<sup>14</sup> The third or a similar promise occurs in the York and Chester plays.<sup>15</sup> In none of these cycles is Noah spoken of directly as the second progenitor of the human race; this phrase has, to be sure, an ecclesiastical flavor like that found so prominently in the Nativity plays, but the touch is too slight to be of any significance.

The Noah play contains in the story of Lamech a striking addition to the incidents provided for in the Prologue. If the play had, at the time of the writing of the Prologue, contained the Lamech episode, it is highly improbable that it would have entirely escaped mention in the Prologue. When Noah has received his commission from the Angel, we have the direction: "Hic transit Noe cum familia sua pro navi, quo exeunte, locum interludii subintret statim Lameth conductus ab adolescente, et dicens." Then follows the story of the death of Cain and after that this stage-direction: "Hic recedat Lameth et statim intrat Noe cum navi cantantes." The last part of this play, including the Lamech story, is written in a meter different from that of the rest of the group. From the beginning of the scene between Noah and the Angel to the end of the play a double quatrain in a tumbling measure is employed. This tumbling meter is a later form of verse and occurs elsewhere in the cycle only where the plays bear marked evidence of later reworking. It seems probable, therefore, that this episode was introduced into the cycle during the period of revision, and the adjoining parts of the play rewritten to suit it and to suit stationary performances. In this connection it is significant that in the genealogies written in the earlier folios of the manuscript in larger, more ornamental script, we have after the name of Lamech, in the scribe's ordinary hand which he uses in writing the text, this note: "that slew Caym, this Caym had 2 wyffys, etc."

<sup>13</sup> Gayley, *Plays of Our Forefathers*, p. 139.

<sup>14</sup> *The Towneley Mysteries*, E. E. T. S., p. 15.

<sup>15</sup> *The York Mysteries*, p. 56; *The Chester Whitsun Plays*, E. E. T. S., p. 70.

Aside from the tumbling meter, the Old Testament plays present three regular forms of verse: (1) The prologue meter *a b a b a b c d d d c*, (2) ballad verse *a a a b c c c b*, (3) simple double quatrain *a b a b b c b c*. The prologue meter is undoubtedly the basal meter of this group and of much of the rest of the cycle. It begins with the Prologue and, with but one exception, where two simple quatrains are introduced (stanzas 15 and 16, describing the Trial of Joseph and Mary and Joseph and the Midwives) is maintained throughout the Prologue, the Fall of Lucifer, and the first part of the Fall of Man, down to the scene where God visits the garden and reproves Adam, Eve, and the Serpent. It is noteworthy that this last-mentioned scene is in a different meter, namely, the ballad measure. The prologue meter is then again resumed and carried through the rest of this play, the whole of Cain and Abel, and the first part of the Noah play, when we have the introduction of the tumbling meter as noted before. Then with the Abraham and Isaac play we have the introduction of the simple double quatrain which is to be equally fundamental throughout the cycle.

A study of the stage-directions and the appearance of the manuscript in this part of the cycle seems to indicate that these Old Testament plays were at the time of the writing of this manuscript regarded as a unit and possibly presented as one play. After the Cain and Abel play, instead of the direction, "*Hic incipit apparicio Noe*," or something to that effect, we have the simple "*Introitus Noe*." This is written in the manuscript (folio 20b) opposite Cain's last speech; then a half page is left blank and the Noah play begins on the next page without any stage-direction. The direction, "*Introitus Abrahe*," is written (folio 25b) after the Noah play in the same line with the direction, "*Et hic recedant cum navi*." The next play follows immediately without any break in the manuscript, the figure "5" being written in the margin. But at the end of the Abraham and Isaac play the word "*Explicit*" is written in unusually large letters and nearly a page and a half of the manuscript is left blank before the Moses play begins, which is introduced with an "*Introitus Moyses*."

The manuscript in this section presents one or two other interesting features. On folio 10 in the play of the Fall of Lucifer appears the name "*Robert Hegge Dunelmensis*," written across the top of the page. A genealogy from Adam to Noah begins on folio 16b and extends to folio 18, written, in the ornamental style noted before, across the bottom of the page. On folio 21, the page on which the Noah play begins, this genealogy is resumed and carried through from Noah to Loth, ending on folio 22b. There is on folio 24 a description of the ark as being three hundred cubits long, fifty in breadth and thirty high, and the flood as towering over the highest mountain.

The stage-directions in this group of plays are simple and written entirely in Latin.



GROUP II

- |                                   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| vi. Moses and the Laws            | xiii. Mary's Visit to Elizabeth     |
| vii. The Prophets                 | xiv. The Trial of Joseph and Mary   |
| viii. The Barrenness of Anna      | xv. Joseph and the Midwives         |
| ix. Mary in the Temple            | xvi. The Adoration of the Shepherds |
| x. Mary's Betrothal               | xviii. The Adoration of the Magi    |
| xi. The Salutation and Conception | xix. The Purification               |
| xii. Joseph's Trouble about Mary  | xx. The Slaughter of the Innocents  |

PROLOGUE

PLAYS

*Moses and the Laws*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| vi.  | vi. The burning bush. Moses, praying, sees the bush. (6)                                    |
| Moses receives the two tablets                       | God commands him to remove his shoes, etc.  |
| And preaches the ten commandments to all the people. | God gives him the two tablets and orders him to preach to the people.                       |
|  | The ten commandments, each followed by explanations and applications, are recited in order. |

*The Prophets*

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| vii. The seventh pageant shall be of "Jesse rote," out of which doth spring our "bote." Kings and prophets shall prophesy of a queen, who shall heal our strife and win us wealth without end, in heaven to abide. | vii. <i>Isaiah</i> : A virgin shall conceive . . . (7)  |
| Her son shall save us by his wounds.   | <i>Radix Jesse</i> : A branch shall spring . . .  |
|  | <i>David rex</i> : Out of my blood . . .  |
|  | <i>Jeremiah</i> : God shall take lineage of priest and king.  |
|  | <i>Solomon rex</i> : Temple . . . a figure of the maid.   |
|  | <i>Ezeckiel</i> : A gate that was sperd . . .   |
|  | <i>Roboas rex</i> : Of our kindred a maid . . .   |
|  | <i>Micheas</i> : Even as Eve mother of woe . . .  |
|  | <i>Abias rex</i> : All our mirth cometh of a maid . . .   |
|  | <i>Daniel</i> : I saw a tree; all the fiends of hell shall be afraid when that maiden's fruit thereon they see. |
|  | <i>Asa rex</i> : God will be born of a maid and be torn on the cross.   |
|  | <i>Jonas</i> : On third day shall rise . . .  |
|  | <i>Josophat rex</i> believes all that has been said.  |
|  | <i>Abdias</i> : When he is risen, death shall be driven to damnation.   |
|  | <i>Joras rex</i> : After resurrection . . . shall return to heaven.   |
|  | <i>Abacuche</i> : He shall be judge in heaven.  |
|  | <i>Ozias rex</i> : He shall send the spirit.  |
|  | <i>Ezechias rex</i> : A maid by meekness shall bring mercy.   |

*Sophosas:* That maiden's birth our wealth shall dress.

*Manasses rex:* The maid's child shall be prince of peace.

*Baruk:* All his foes shall be punished on doomsday.

*Amon rex:* Lord grant us mercy on that dreadful day.

*The Barrenness of Anna*

viii. Contemplacio's Prologue. Cryst conserve the congregation, etc. This play is of the Mother of Mercy. (8)

1. How Anna and Joachim were her parents.
2. Later she was offered to temple service.
3. Married to Joseph.
4. Salutation.
5. The meeting with Elizabeth and therewith a conclusion.

Therefore I pray you peace.

Ysakar announces *festum Encenniorum*, celebrated three times a year, etc.

Joachim goes to the Temple. He introduces himself as a righteous man, because he divides his property, giving one-third to the Temple, one-third to pilgrims, and one-third to those who live with him—as should every good curate. Anna and Joachim grieve and fear to go to the Temple because they have no child. Vow to consecrate their child, if one be given them, to the Temple service. Anna mentions the prophecy of the Virgin. Joachim goes, taking two turtle doves to offer as a sacrifice.

Service in the Temple. "Benedicta sit beata trinitas." Ysakar refuses Joachim's sacrifice, because he is childless; service continues, with an Episcopus, Minister, and Chorus.

Joachim and Anna grieve over disgrace. Joachim goes to shepherds for comfort. Joachim and Anna pray. Angel comes to Joachim, sings, "Exultet coelum laudibus," reminds him of Sarah, Rachel, and the mothers of Samson and Samuel, promises a child. Joachim and shepherds rejoice. Anna, grieving, goes to seek her husband and is comforted by the Angel.

Angel goes to heaven while Anna and Joachim rejoice.

*Mary in the Temple*

ix. Contemplacio's Prologue (for this one play only). (9)

We have seen the story of Joachim and Anna,

how Our Lady was conceived. Now we show you how she was offered in the Temple. She shall appear as a child of three years, and remain there, ever according to God's will, up to her fourteenth year.

Joachim and Anna bring Mary at three years of age to the Temple; she gives her consent.

They present her to Ysakar; prayers and farewells, etc.

Mary ascends fifteen steps of the Temple, reciting a psalm for each step.

Episcopus gives her five maidens to wait upon her, Meditation, Contrysyon, Compassyon, and Cleennes.

And seven priests to teach her, DyscreSSION, Devocion, Dylexcion, and Deliberacion, Declaracion, Determy nacion, Dyvynacion.

Mary offers seven petitions.

Angel ministers to her, gives her the significance of the five letters of her name. The earth quakes and an angel passes back and forth, bringing gifts. Chorus in heaven. Mary brings the bishop's gift to her sisters.

Contemplacio's Epilogue. Here you have seen the presentation of Our Lady. We pray you of your patience that we have passed these matters over so lightly. Now we shall proceed to "disponsacion," which was fourteen years after this. The parliament of heaven and how God's son became man and the Salutation after shall be.

#### *Mary's Betrothal*

x. (Written over another figure.) Abyacar (Abiathar) commands that all maidens who are fourteen years of age be brought before him.

Joachim and Anna bring forth Mary.

Mary wishes to remain chaste.

The bishop asks God for guidance and the Angel tells him to send for David's kindred and bid them present their rods.

x. Ysakar issues the command that all maidens who are fourteen years of age be brought before him. 1( )

Joachim and Anna prepare to obey the bishop's command. They bring Mary to the Temple, but there is no allusion throughout the play to her having lived in the Temple.

Mary tells the story of her parents' vow and says that she wishes to live in chastity.

Bishop prays for advice and is told to send for the sons of David and to bid them present their rods.

- x. (A new division also numbered 10.) A messenger is sent.

The presentation of the wands. When Joseph offers his rod, it bursts into bloom.

He pledges his wife to live in chastity.

The bishop gives her three maidens that she may have some comfort.

The messengers go. Joseph grumbles but is finally persuaded to come to the Temple.

The presentation of the rods. Joseph does not at first present his rod, but when he does so, it bursts into bloom.

Upon being told that he is to wed Mary, he protests that he is too old, but is finally prevailed upon. He pledges her to live in chastity.

Marriage ceremony performed by bishop. He gives Mary three maidens: Susanne, Rebecca, Sephore, each of whom in turn expresses her willingness to go.

Mary bids her parents farewell.

Joseph goes to prepare a home, bids Mary wait there and worship God.

He returns and brings Mary to Nazareth, says he must leave her again and labor for their sustenance in a far country.

#### *Salutation and Conception*

x1.

- xi. Contemplacio's Prologue. For four thousand six (11) hundred and four years man has suffered for sin in hell. Now may God have mercy and remember the prayer of Isaiah, etc.

The Four Daughters of God. Virtutes: "Our office is to present prayers. Mercy we cry, etc." They speak of the fall of Lucifer. Deus says he will prepare a way of salvation. The four daughters of God dispute. The Son comes forth and suggests that one who is guiltless must die as an atonement for man's sin.

Council of the Trinity, in which the plans for man's salvation are made.

God sends Gabriel to Mary. The Son says he is to be born of Mary. The Holy Ghost says that he will perform this miracle.

Gabriel salutes Mary. Holy Ghost descends. They depart.

Gabriel salutes Our Lady. The three maidens hear voices but see no one. The angel says her son shall be called Jesus.

#### *Joseph's Trouble about Mary.*

- xii. (The word "hellenthe" crossed out.) Joseph returns.
- xii. Joseph returns, says he can not see Mary's face for the light that surrounds it. Mary explains that it is ordained by God that whoever beholds her shall be "grettly steryd to vertu."



He is troubled; leaves  
Mary, thinking never  
to return.

An angel tells him the  
story and Joseph  
goes back.

Joseph realizes Mary's condition and, after he has  
debated whether or not to expose her before the  
bishop, resolves to leave her forever.

Mary prays that God will convince him. God com-  
mands an angel to visit Joseph.

The angel explains to Joseph; he returns home  
and is reconciled.

*Mary's Visit to Elizabeth*

xiii. Mary wishes to go to visit Elizabeth, and Joseph (13)  
gives his consent.

Contemplacio's Prologue. King David, ordained  
twenty-four priests to serve in the Temple. They  
were called "summi sacerdotes." One was prince  
of priests, Zachariah; his wife was Elizabeth; the  
story of the annunciation to Elizabeth and how  
Zacharias was made dumb.

Mary and Joseph arrive at the house of Elizabeth.  
Elizabeth greets Mary as the Mother of God.  
Each of the women tells the story of her an-  
nunciation.

Mary repeats the *Magnificat* in Latin and Elizabeth  
translates it, sentence for sentence, into English.

Mary says she will stay with Elizabeth three months  
until the child shall be born.

Joseph greets Zacharias. Elizabeth explains why  
Zacharias can not speak, and Joseph seeks to  
comfort him.

Joseph and Mary go home. Elizabeth and Zach-  
arias go to the Temple.

Contemplacio's Epilogue. Says he will give a con-  
clusion (as promised in Contemplacio's prologue  
to the whole group of plays). Here we see how  
the *Ave Maria* was made. The Angel said, "Ave,  
gratia plena, Dominus tecum, Benedicta tu in  
mulieribus." <sup>16</sup> And Elizabeth said, "Et benedictus  
fructus ventris tui." <sup>17</sup> Thus the church added  
Mary and Jesus. Who says Our Lady's psalter  
daily for a year shall have pardon ten thousand  
eight hundred years.

Mary remained with Elizabeth three months  
until John was born, and then Zacharias re-  
gained his speech. They composed the *Benedictus*  
and the *Magnificat*. Then Our Lady took her  
leave. We thank you; with *Ave* we began and  
with *Ave* is our conclusion.

<sup>16</sup> Halliwell, p. 112.

<sup>17</sup> Halliwell, p. 126.

*Trial of Joseph and Mary*

- Den calls the court; calls a long list of names, John Jurdon, Geffry Gyle, etc.
- xiv. This pageant shall be of the trial of Joseph and Mary. How they were slandered (a simple quatrain),
- And must go to their purgation.
- xiv. "Hic intrabit pagentum de purgatione Mariae et Joseph."
- Two detractors, "Bakbytere" and "Reyse-sclaundyr," meet and tell the gossip about Mary, resolving to spread the news in all quarters.
- The court scene. The Episcopus (called in the stage-direction Abizachar, as in Prologue to Mary's Betrothal), having heard the slander, sends for Joseph and Mary. They are summoned by Den. Trial.
- Joseph goes through the purgation ceremony and proves his innocence.
- Mary goes through the purgation and proves her innocence.
- First detractor drinks potion and falls to the ground. All kneel to Mary.

*Joseph and the Midwives*

- xv. Joseph goes after midwives (a simple quatrain).
- xv. Joseph and Mary start for Bethlehem. The Cherry-tree episode. They are directed by a citizen of Bethlehem to the stable where they find shelter. Joseph goes for midwives; Salome and Zelomye return with him.
- When they arrive, they can not enter the house for the brightness of the light in it.
- Joseph finally enters and finds that the child is already born.
- Test of Mary's virginity; Salome's punishment and forgiveness.

*The Adoration of the Shepherds*

- Angels shall sing.
- Shepherds shall hear of the birth of Christ, And shall visit Him
- With reverence and worship.
- xvi. Angels sing, "Gloria in excelsis." Three shepherds, two of whom are called "Boosras" and "Maunfras," speak of the great light they have seen and speak of the prophecies, Balaam, Moses and the Law, Amos, and Daniel.
- Angels' song repeated. The shepherds seek to imitate the song.
- They go to seek Christ, singing on the way, "Stella coeli extirpavit."
- They adore Christ (a series of dignified verses of adoration; no gifts).
- Joseph bids them spread the tidings, which they promise to do, and take their farewell.

*The Adoration of the Magi*

- xv. (The attempt to correct the numbering in the Prologue is given up here.)  
 Three kings shall come with gold, myrrh, and frankincense.
- xviii. (The number xvii is omitted in the MS.) (17)  
 Herod gives a long, boastful speech, introducing and praising himself. He leaves to go into his hall to change his garments.  
 The three kings meet; introduce themselves to each other: first, Baltazare from Saba, bearing gold; second, Melchizar from Tarys, bearing incense; third, Jasper from Ypotan and Archage, bearing myrrh.  
 Herod in another boastful speech brags of his beauty and fine apparel as well as his power. He has heard that a child is born in Bethlehem. He sends his steward out to see if there is any trouble abroad.  
 The steward finds the three kings sleeping under a tree, and he brings them to Herod's court. They tell Herod of their mission, of the star, of Balaam's prophecy, etc. Herod bids them seek the child and report to him.
- King Herod's steward sees them and brings them into the king's presence.  
 The kings of Cologne tell Herod of their mission and of the star, and of how they intend to worship Christ that day.

The kings take their leave, while Herod expresses his wrath. The kings see the star again.  
 They adore Christ, offering him gifts. They prepare to go back to Herod.  
 On the way they fall asleep and the angel warns them. The kings awake, tell of the vision, resolving not to go back to Herod.

*The Purification*

- xix. Simeon Justus, priest in Jerusalem, prays that he (18 ) may see the Savior before he dies. An angel reassures him.  
 Simeon and Anna rejoice; they go to the Temple, prophesy Christ's death, etc.  
 Joseph and Mary come to the Temple. Simeon and Anna hail Christ. "Nunc dimittis servum tuum."  
 Service in Temple. They burn four candles in honor of Christ. The child offered on the altar.  
 Joseph pays five pence to take the child back again.  
 Capellanus gives them back the child.  
 Mary offers the fowls on the altar.

*Slaughter of Innocents and Death of Herod*

- xvi.  
 xx. Senescallus returns and reports that the Magi (19) have fled.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Herod, angry, sends soldiers out to slay the children,<br/>         But Jesus is not to be found, for in response to the angel's warning, he has gone to Egypt.<br/>         The children are torn from their mothers' arms and slain.</p> <p>xvii. The soldiers bring the slaughtered children before Herod. Herod rejoices and orders a feast.</p> <p>Death enters,</p> <p>And the devil takes his soul.</p> | <p>Herod raves (a long alliterative speech). He sends soldiers to slay all the children in Bethlehem under two years of age. Two soldiers leave. An angel appears to Joseph and warns him. He takes Mary and the child to Egypt.</p> <p>"Tunc ibunt milites ad pueros." Two women lament the loss of their children.</p> <p>The soldiers report. Herod is pleased and orders a feast.</p> <p>The banquet scene, merry-making. Death enters, says he is sent by God to slay Herod. Herod bids his soldiers rejoice. The minstrels play. Mors slays Herod and the two soldiers. The Devil carries them off. Mors moralizes.</p> |
|---|---|

In this part of the cycle we meet with greater complications and more difficult problems. The evidences of revision are much more marked than in the Old Testament plays. Four of the plays are not provided for at all in the Prologue, and it seems probable that they have been added as a whole to the cycle. Many of the plays that are demanded by the Prologue bear distinct evidences of having been reworked to such an extent that they are practically new. For the sake of clearness it seems best to treat each play separately, discussing its relation to the general Prologue, its meter and stage-directions, and any peculiarities that may appear in the manuscript.

#### *Moses and the Laws*

The direction, "Incipit Moyses," is written very conspicuously in large letters at the top of the page, a thing which seems to indicate that the first five plays had constituted a separate unit, and that this is the beginning of a new group. This would place the *Processus Prophetarum*, of which this play is essentially a part, with the Nativity group rather than with the Old Testament plays.<sup>18</sup> This play, however, ends with the direction, "Explicit Moyses," indicating that it stood alone as a separate unit.

The stage-directions of the play are all very simple and written entirely in Latin, a thing which leads one to infer that the play has kept its early and rather primitive form. The meter too is simple. With but one very minor irregularity of rhyme, where a couplet precedes the regular stanza, the

<sup>18</sup> In this connection cf. Dr. Hardin Craig's article, *The Origin of the Old Testament Plays*, in *Mod. Phil.* x (April, 1913).

double quatrain is used throughout. There is nothing in the style or action of the play to indicate that it has been revised by a later hand. But the introduction of the burning bush in a play of the Laws presents an interesting complication. This incident would properly belong in an Exodus play, and its presence here may be a confusion of the Exodus with a play of the Laws. The Chester cycle has no episode of the burning bush; but in the York and Towneley, where the incident occurs, it is found in the Exit from Egypt and the Pharaoh respectively. The play of the Ten Commandments occurs in the Towneley cycle in the play called *Processus Prophetarum*, in the Chester, in the *Pagina de Mose et Rege Balaak et Balaam Propheta*. York, having no regular *Processus Prophetarum*, has also no play of Moses and the Laws.

### *The Prophets*

Although this play does not begin with an "Incipit," it ends with the direction, "Explicit Jesse," which is the only stage-direction in the play. It presents no peculiarities of manuscript except that a genealogy of Mary, similar to the genealogies of the first group, begins on folio 37 and is continued on folio 37b.

The play is written in the double quatrain measure of the preceding play. From the time Solomon enters each character speaks only four lines, but the single quatrains thus formed can in every case be united to form the typical double quatrain, a b a b b c b c.

It will be noted that the Prologue states that prophets shall prophesy, not of Christ, but of a "qwene the whiche xal staunche our stryff and moote"; and an examination of the prophecies will show that the emphasis lies upon the birth of the Virgin, and not of Christ. The introduction of thirteen kings, all of whom announce themselves as progenitors of Mary, shows this tendency, as well as the fact that there are no less than fifteen direct references to the Virgin in these prophecies. In the Towneley *Processus Prophetarum* Mary is mentioned directly only once, in the prophecy of Daniel,<sup>19</sup> and there the main part of the prophecy concerns Christ. The Towneley Shepherds' play introduces the traditional prophecy from Isaiah, and also mentions the prefiguration of the Virgin in the burning bush. But neither here nor in the cycles of York and Chester is the attention so constantly directed to the Virgin. The fact that the Prologue specifically provides for prophecies of this nature indicates that the unusual interest in Virgin Mary was a peculiarity of the cycle originally and not to be ascribed wholly to the period of revision.

The following table of the prophecies found in the four cycles will serve to show more clearly how *Ludus Coventriae* is distinguished from the other plays.

<sup>19</sup> *The Towneley Mysteries*, E. E. T. S., p. 64, l. 232.



## THE PROPHET PLAY

	COVENTRY	YORK (Prologue in Annunciation)	TOWNELEY	CHESTER
Isaiah	Quod virgo concipiet et pariet filium nomen Emanuel.	Propter hoc dabit dominus ipse vobis signum. Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium. . . . His name shall be Emanuel . . . he shall sit on the throne of David. Zelus domini faciet hoc, etc.		A maiden shall conceive and bear a child . . . and he shall be called Emanuel.
Radix Jesse	Egredietur virga de radice Jesse et flos de radice ejus ascendet.	Egredietur virga de Jesse, etc. The rod is Mary; the flower, Christ (spoken by Isaiah).	(See Isaiah's prophecy in the Shepherds' play in this cycle.)	
David rex	Out of my blood shall spring our bote. A clean maid shall be a mother, etc. "Ageyns the devellys with fals illusyon, with regalle power to make man free."		He will light from the tower of heaven to be men's savior, and then return to be lord over all. Kings shall worship him and bring him rich gifts, etc. Ostende nobis domine misericordiam tuam et salutari tuum da nobis. Till the lord come we must go to hell, etc.	De summo coelo egressio ejus, et occursum ejus ad summum ejus. . . . Later shall judge the earth.

THE PROPHET PLAY—Continued

	COVENTRY	YORK	TOWNELEY	CHESTER
Jeremiah	God will take lineage of priest and king and buy us all from our offence.		(See the Shepherds' play in this cycle.)	
Solomon rex	I am the second king of this root of Jesse. I built a temple that is to prefigure the maid who is to be the mother of the great Messiah.			Deducunt oculi mei lacrimas per diem et noctem, et non taceant contritione magna contrita est virgo filia populi mei et plaga.
Ezechiel	A gate was truly closed and no man but a prince might go therein.			Vidi portam in domo Domini clausam et dixit angelus ad me 'porta haec non aperietur, sed clausa erit.'
Roboas rex	The third king of Jesse root. Of our kindred a maid shall overcome Satan.			
Michael	Even as Eve was the mother of woe, so shall this maid be the mother of bliss.			Tu Bethlehem, terra Juda nequaquam minima es in principibus Juda; ex te enim exiet, Dux, qui reget populum meum Israel.

## THE PROPHET PLAY—Continued

	COVENTRY	YORK	TOWNELEY	CHESTER
Abias rex	All our mirth comes of a maid.			
Daniel	I saw a tree and all the fiends of hell shall be afraid when the maid- en's fruit thereon they see.		Cum venerit sanctus sanctorum cessabit un- cio vestra. Because of Adam's fall we all en- dure sorrow, but God will take pity on us and send his son as a ransom. He shall be born of a maiden and save all that are lost.	
Asa rex	God will be born of a maid and to bring us to bliss will be torn and rent on a tree.			Clamavi de tribulacione mea ad Dominum et exaudivit de ventre. Inferi clamavi et ex- audisti vocem meam et projecisti me.
Jonah	On the third day he shall rise from death as pre- figured in me.			
Josophat rex	I am the sixth king of Jesse root, and I be- lieve all that my pro- genitors have said.			
Obadiah	When he is risen again, death shall be driven to endless damnation.			
Joras rex	Seventh king. When he is risen he shall re- turn to heaven.			



THE PROPHET PLAY—Continued

COVENTRY	YORK	TOWNELEY	CHESTER
Habakkuk	He shall sit in heaven as judge over us.		
Ozias rex	Also sprung of Jesse roie. He shall send his spirit to his disciples. He will send his spirit on young and old.	Likens Christ to the dew that falls from heaven.	Effundam de spiritu meo super omnem carnem et prophetabunt filii vestri.
Joel			
Joathas rex	I am the ninth king. From my kindred shall come a man who shall save mankind.		
Haggai	He will save his sheep from the wolf.		
Achas rex	I worshipped idols until Isaiah rebuked me and said that a maid should give birth to the Messiah.		
Ozias	Agrees with Isaiah that a virgin shall bear Emanuel.	Ergo quasi ros et virgo Israel germinabit sicut lilium.	
Hosea			
Hezekiah rex	The eleventh king. A maid by meekness shall bring mercy.		
Sophosas	A maiden's birth shall bring our wealth.		
Manassch rex	Twelfth king. A maiden's child shall be prince of peace.		

## THE PROPHET PLAY—Continued

	COVENTRY	YORK	TOWNELEY	CHESTER
Baruk	His foemen shall receive their reward at the judgment.			
Amon rex	The last of the kings prays God to grant them all grace.			
Amos		Deus pater disposuit sa- lutem fieri in medio terre, etc. He was to be the son of a maiden. She was wed in order to deceive the devil.		
Isaac		Quoniam in semine tuo benedicentur omnes gentes. God himself said this to Abraham.  Orate celi desuper, Isaac prayed for the dew of heaven, etc. . . . A seed that shall save us, which was the Holy Ghost, that came to a chaste maiden.		
Jacob		Non auferetur sceptrum de Judas, veniat qui mittendus est. Et ipse erit expectatio gen- cium.		

## THE PROPHET PLAY—Continued

COVENTRY	YORK	TOWNELEY	CHESTER
John the Baptist	Ecce mitto angelum meum ante faciem tuam qui preparabit viam tuam ante te. Ego quidem batizo in aqua vos autem batiz- abimini spiritu sancto.	Prophetam excitabit deus de fratribus vestris. Omnia anima que non audieret prophetam il- lum extirminabitur de populo suo. Nemo propheta sine hon- ora in patria sua. Iudicii signum tellus su- dore madescit e celo advenit per seda fu- tus. Scilicet in carne presens ut judicet or- bem. . . . The earth shall be burned. Hill and dale shall be cv- ened.	To Jacob's blood and Is- rael, God shall send joy and heale; And as a lyon in his weale, Christ shalbe haused hye, And rise also in noble araye, As a prynde to wyn great paye, Overcome his enemies, Orietur stella ex Jacob et exurget homo de Israel et confunget omnes duces aliegen- arum, et erit omnis terra professio ejus.
Moses			
Sibyl			
Balaam			

PROPHECIES IN THE SHEPHERDS' PLAYS  
YORK  
COVENTRY

TOWNELEY I

Moses	A child shall be born of a maid, torn on a tree and slain to deliver those who are lost.		Saw him in the burning bush which prefigured her holy virginity.
Balaam (See Chester prophets, above)	Out of Jacob shall shine a "skye" and with his blood he shall save many.	A star shall shine and signify that he shall be born of a maid and save us by his blood.	
Amos	A fruit sweeter than "bawmys brethe," His death shall slay the death of our souls and draw us from hell.		
Daniel	The wise God to save us from woe shall open his heaven and visit a maiden.		He alone is God's son, his seat and throne shall be our stay. (Daniel is in a group with six others, all of whom give same prophecy. See below.)
Isaiah		<i>Hosea and Isaiah together:</i> A prince without peer should descend to a lady to save mankind which is lost. He shall be born in Bethlehem.	He shall be a prince, sit upon the throne of David. Born of a virgin of the root of Jesse which shall bring forth a flower, etc.

PROPHECIES IN THE SHEPHERDS' PLAYS—Continued

TOWNELEY II		YORK	COVENTRY
Sibyl	Spoke of him.		
Nebuchadnezzar	Saw him in the fire with the three Jews.		
Jeremiah	Also spoke of him.		
Habakkuk Elijah Elizabeth and Zachariah David John the Baptist Daniel	Prophesied that he is God's son alone. His seat and throne shall be our stay.		
Virgil	Iam nova progenies cello demit- tur alto. Iam rediet virgo, redeunt saturnia regna.		

After these two plays, which are comparatively simple, we have the introduction of an Expositor who is called *Contemplacio*. He recites, before the play proper of Anna and Joachim begins, a general prologue promising to present to the people (1) the story of Anna and Joachim, (2) Mary's presentation in the Temple, (3) her betrothal, (4) the story of the Salutation, and, finally, (5) Mary's visit to Elizabeth. In connection with this last play he promises a conclusion. Then follow these five plays dealing with the life of the Virgin which in general tone and style are very different from the plays we have examined so far. The ecclesiastical element is very prominent in these plays, and there can be little doubt that they were introduced into the cycle at some time later than the writing of the Prologue. I do not think, however, that an entirely new group of plays was simply incorporated as a whole into the cycle without any modification. Some of the plays indicate clearly that old material has been combined with new. The Prologue provides for plays on two of these subjects, Mary's Betrothal and the Salutation. The other three plays promised by *Contemplacio* are not provided for in the Prologue, and in the case of the first two, the Barrenness of Anna and Mary's Presentation, there can be little doubt that they are entirely new. The Visit to Elizabeth, however, bears internal evidence of the combination of two versions.

This *Contemplacio* does not appear again after this group of Virgin plays and is probably, as Collier states, one of the later additions to the cycle.<sup>20</sup>

With this group of plays the tumbling meter makes its reappearance, and here, too, we have for the first time the introduction of English stage-directions. Throughout the whole group of plays dealing with the Nativity, English stage-directions are used only in these Virgin plays and in the play of the Purification which is also unprovided for in the Prologue. These points will be discussed more specifically in connection with the individual plays.

### *The Barrenness of Anna*

This play is taken up largely with services in the Temple, the singing of hymns, sequences, etc. It is distinctly ecclesiastical in tone and is written entirely in the tumbling measure, with a great deal of alliteration in the first part of the play. There are two or three little irregularities of rhyme, but the play, taken as a whole, employs the rhyming scheme of the double quatrain. The fact that it is not accounted for in the Prologue, taken together

<sup>20</sup> The one instance in the Herod play of the Passion where the expositor is called *Contemplacio* is, I think, hardly to be considered as a reappearance of that character. It seems probable that it suggested itself to the scribe that it would be well to call the expositor in the later play by the same name as the similar character in the earlier group.



with this use of the tumbling meter, seems to indicate beyond any doubt that the whole play is an interpolation.

Here, too, we have our first English stage-direction, "There they xall synge this sequens, 'Benedicta, etc.,' and in that tyme Ysaker with his ministeres insensythe the autere and than thei make her offryng, and Isaker seyth, etc." And from this point English stage-directions are used freely, though not exclusively, throughout the *Contemplacio* group. In this play and the following the bishop is given the name Ysaker, but in the general Prologue to the tenth play, as well as in the play of the Trial of Joseph and Mary, he is called Abyacar. So that it would seem that Abyacar is his cycle name. In this connection it is interesting to note that in the manuscript (folio 37b) in the genealogy there is a note to the effect that Ysaker was the father of Anne. The name Ysaker (Issachar) is derived from the *Gospel of the Nativity of Mary*; Abiathar from *Pseudo-Matthew*.

#### *The Presentation of Mary in the Temple*

This play, like the preceding, is not provided for in the general Prologue and comes into the cycle as entirely new. It also is filled with ecclesiastical material, such as the fifteen psalms that Mary recites when she ascends the fifteen steps in the Temple, the allegorical names given to her maids and to the seven priests who are to instruct her, the significance of the five letters in her name, and so forth.

The manuscript shows no distinct division between these two plays; *Contemplacio's* introductory speech<sup>21</sup> follows immediately upon Anne's last speech in the preceding play, and the figure 9 also stands in the margin here. Then we have, following immediately, the direction, "Here Joachym and Anna, with oure lady between hem, etc." After this there is a short space left blank before Joachim's speech, "Blyssyd be oure Lord . . .," which begins at the top of the next folio, 49b.

The stage-directions are in both English and Latin. The meter, like that of the former play, is the tumbling measure. The stanzas are largely double quatrains, but with occasional single quatrains, particularly in the part where Mary recites her fifteen psalms. *Contemplacio's* speech at the end of the play shows a confusion, as far as rhyme scheme is concerned, of the quatrain with the prologue stanza thus: a b a b c d c d b e b e f g g g f.

*Contemplacio* introduces this play with a prologue that reviews the play of Anna and Joachim before it tells what is to follow in this play. At the end of the play *Contemplacio* gives an epilogue reviewing this one play and also introducing the two which are to follow it. In the manuscript the figure 10 is written opposite this second part of *Contemplacio's* speech, and if this

<sup>21</sup> Halliwell, p. 79.

part be regarded as a prologue to the following play, each of the five plays mentioned in Contemplacio's first general prologue are specially introduced by that character. And, regarding the first four lines of his prologue to this play of the Presentation of Mary<sup>22</sup> as an epilogue to the play of Anna and Joachim, three of the five plays have a conclusion or epilogue recited by this same Contemplacio.

This character would not appear on one pageant and recite his epilogue and then suddenly appear on the next and recite a prologue to that play. There are no directions to this effect, nor does it seem possible that he could do so. Moreover, the characters of these five plays are much the same. Anna and Joachim appear in the first three; Mary plays in all of them; Joseph appears in the Betrothal and the Visit to Elizabeth; the bishop Ysakar or Abyacar appears in the first three. So that evidently these five plays, as they now stand, were acted on the same stage as one continuous performance, whether on a pageant or a fixed stage.

#### *Mary's Betrothal*

The material covered in this play is provided for by the general Prologue, but it is divided into two pageants, one of which, originally numbered 8, treats of Mary's appearance in the Temple for espousal; and the other, originally numbered 9, treats of the presentation of the rods. As they now stand they are both numbered 10. It seems that the scribe attempted at first to make the numbering of the Prologue agree with the plays. He soon abandoned his attempt, however, as may be seen by looking at the preceding table of comparison between Prologue and plays.

The first section of the Prologue carries the action, from the bishop's proclamation that the daughters of the Jews shall be presented for marriage to the angel's command that David's kindred shall be sent for and that they shall carry white rods in their hands. The second part continues the action, presenting the blossoming of Joseph's rod, and so on to the marriage. The actual incidents of the play correspond exactly with those mentioned in the Prologue, as far as the latter goes. But there seems to be an elaboration of certain scenes introducing church ceremonies (such as that of the marriage ceremony, which is given in detail) that are not in keeping with the general simplicity of the earlier plays of the cycle. The Prologue ends with the statement that the bishop gives Mary three maidens to live with her and wait upon her. These maidens are given names in the play, Rebecca, Susanne, and Sephore. Then the play goes on to relate how Joseph left Mary at the Temple, went to Nazareth, rented a house, and came back to bring his wife to their new home. He then leaves her again to go into a far country to earn

<sup>22</sup> Halliwell, p. 79.



means for their sustenance. Of all this there is no mention in the general Prologue.

Another notable circumstance is that, whereas in the preceding play Mary is left at the Temple with the understanding that she is to remain there until her fourteenth year, in this play she is brought to the Temple by her parents and no mention is made of her having been there before. So also in his epilogue to the preceding play, *Contemplacio* speaks of this play as taking place fourteen years after the Presentation instead of eleven years.

The story of the presentation of the rods is old material and generally known throughout the Middle Ages. Though it is not actually presented in any of the other cycles, it is mentioned both in the Towneley and York cycles.<sup>23</sup> This circumstance, together with the closeness of parallel between the Prologue and the play, makes it evident that the play as a whole does not belong to the period of revision. What probably took place seems to me to be this: When the scribe came to add a new Virgin play, he found in the old cycle a play on this same subject of the Betrothal of Mary which corresponded pretty closely with the section of the Virgin play dealing with this subject; so he used the old play as a basis and possibly borrowed little touches here and there from the Virgin play. The elaboration of the marriage ceremony and the adding of the incidents which follow may be accounted for in this way.

A study of the metrical arrangement of the play supports such a conclusion. There is very little use of the tumbling line which is elsewhere characteristic of the Virgin play. It appears distinctly only in the scenes where the bishop consults with his minister<sup>24</sup> and where he pronounces the marriage vows for Joseph and Mary. The main body of the play is in the prologue meter, and other parts are written in the simple double quatrain stanza.

In this same connection it is interesting to note that all the stage-directions of this play are in Latin.

This section of the manuscript also presents some puzzling problems. Folios 51b, 52b, 53b are blank, while on folio 51 Joseph's speech, beginning "In gret labore my lyff I lede," and ending "To some man dowty and bold,"<sup>25</sup> is written in a later hand. It is also out of place and should be inserted, as noted in the manuscript, after line 7 on folio 53.

### *The Salutation and Conception*

With this play we have the reappearance both of the ecclesiastical tone and of English stage-directions. The general Prologue to the cycle mentions Gabriel's visit to the Virgin and also states that the three maidens waited upon her, heard the conversation between Mary and the Angel but

<sup>23</sup> *The Towneley Mysteries*, E. E. T. S., p. 93; *York*, p. 103.

<sup>24</sup> Halliwell, p. 93.

<sup>25</sup> Halliwell, pp. 94-95.

saw no one. The three maidens do not appear at all in the play as we now have it, but the greater part of the action is taken up with Contemplacio's explanation of how mankind had suffered four thousand six hundred and four years, and the debate between the four daughters of God, the council of the Trinity, Gabriel's instructions, and so forth, all of which must undoubtedly belong to our ecclesiastical Virgin play. This ecclesiastical tone so pervades the whole play that it would almost seem as if none of the original cycle play had been preserved and that this play, like the Barrenness of Anna and Mary's Presentation, had been substituted entirely from the Virgin play. Mr. Hemingway reaches much the same conclusion.<sup>26</sup> In this connection it is interesting to note that the greater part of the play, beginning with the speech of Justice<sup>27</sup> to the end of the play, is written in a different hand.

The tumbling meter makes its appearance in this play in two instances, the first three stanzas of Contemplacio's speech and the last stanza of Gabriel's speech.<sup>28</sup> Otherwise the play as a whole is written in simple double and single quatrains.

#### *Joseph's Trouble about Mary*

Joseph's return was not mentioned in Contemplacio's prologue, nor does Contemplacio appear in this play. It probably does not belong to the Virgin play, but to the original cycle. The incidents are simple and there is a comparatively consistent relationship with the Prologue, although little touches here and there, such as the halo surrounding Mary's face upon Joseph's return, seem to have an ecclesiastical quality.

The play has no stage-directions and the basal meter is the prologue stanza. The first twenty lines of the play seem to be a confusion of single and double quatrains. Then, beginning at the bottom of page 117 in Halliwell's edition to the last stanza on page 119, with two minor irregularities of rhyme, we find the prologue meter. This verse form is again resumed in the last thirteen lines on page 121, where the angel speaks to Joseph, and also in the last stanza on page 122, where Mary and Joseph are reconciled. After the first four lines of page 119, we have the appearance for the first time of our fifth type of verse, a a b a a b b c b c. It is carried on from this point, with three exceptions where we have the prologue stanza, to the last stanza of the play. The last twelve lines show the same sort of confusion of quatrains that we find in the first part of the play. There is no appearance of the tumbling meter.

<sup>26</sup> Hemingway, *English Nativity Plays*, Intro. p. xxxv. For a comparison of this play with others, see Hemingway, Intro. p. xlv; and Pollard, *English Miracle Plays*, Ed. 1909, pp. xxix, 226; also Miss Traver's *Four Daughters of God*, Bryn Mawr Diss., 1907.

<sup>27</sup> Halliwell, p. 110.

<sup>28</sup> Halliwell, pp. 105, 106, 116.

*Mary's Visit to Elizabeth*

There is no provision for the Visit to Elizabeth in the general Prologue, and the play as it now stands belongs largely to the ecclesiastical play. Nevertheless, it seems improbable that the scene should have been entirely omitted. It seems possible to me that the section of the general Prologue devoted to this play was omitted in the rewriting that took place when the Virgin play was added, or at some earlier period of revision. The Prologue bears evidence of having been tampered with here, since the next two sections, introducing the Trial of Joseph and Mary and Joseph and the Midwives are written in simple quatrains instead of the regular prologue stanza. Moreover, although the birth of Jesus actually takes place in the play of Joseph and the Midwives, it is ascribed by the Prologue to the play of the Shepherds. From its position in the liturgy it is very probable that the play of the Shepherds stood in general for the Nativity.<sup>29</sup> I think it probable that the two plays which follow the Visit to Elizabeth, with their sections in the Prologue, are additions to the original Corpus Christi cycle, though not parts of the Virgin play, since this ends with the Visit to Elizabeth.

The play of Mary's Visit, as it now stands, bears internal evidence that two plays have been combined to form it. After Elizabeth has greeted Mary with the *Ave Maria* and they have recited the *Magnificat*, Mary says that she will stay with Elizabeth three months. Then almost immediately she and Joseph take their leave. At the end of the play, however, Contemplacio says that Mary remained with Elizabeth. So that it would appear that in one version, probably that of the original cycle, Mary and Joseph left as they do here; but that in the ecclesiastical play they remained with Elizabeth three months, until John was born.

The inconsistency of the play of Mary's Visit to Elizabeth indicates not only that this play is made up from two different sources, but also furnishes evidence to substantiate our theory as to the composition of the whole group. In the Virgin play Mary remained with Elizabeth three months, until John was born. But John was six months older than Jesus, so that in this play the visit must have been thought of as taking place immediately after the Salutation. In the original cycle, on the other hand, we believe that the plays came in this order, namely, Betrothal, Salutation, Joseph's Return, Visit to Elizabeth. Now, in the Betrothal, a play preserved largely in its original form, Joseph tells Mary that he must leave her to be gone nine months.<sup>30</sup> When he returns, before the Visit to Elizabeth, he finds that Mary is "great with child." So that in the earlier form of the cycle the Salutation must have taken place very shortly after the Betrothal, and the plays

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Hemingway, p. 260.

<sup>30</sup> Halliwell, p. 104.

of Joseph's Trouble and the Visit to Elizabeth, shortly before the birth of Christ. Thus it appears, beyond question, that the play of the Betrothal and that part of the Visit to Elizabeth which indicates that Mary did not remain with Elizabeth, are consistent with each other and belong to the earlier form of the cycle. Mary's speech in the Visit to Elizabeth<sup>31</sup> indicates clearly that a part of the present play of the Visit to Elizabeth belongs with the Betrothal and the Return of Joseph, thus proving, beyond a doubt, not only that the play of the Visit is composite in structure, but that there was such a play in the original cycle.

Contemplacio's epilogue to this play is the conclusion promised in his first prologue. It is didactic and is concerned for the most part with the worship of the Virgin. Hemingway calls attention to the inaccuracy of the English translations from the Latin in this play and cites it as a proof that the original plays were written in English.<sup>32</sup>

Another argument in favor of a stationary stage for this Virgin play appears here in the stage-direction, "*Et sic transiet circa placeam.*" That is, Joseph and Mary walk about *the place* going to Elizabeth's house, while Contemplacio speaks his prologue. There is also an English stage-direction in this play.

The play begins in the tumbling meter, which is carried through to the twenty-fourth line of page 128 in Halliwell. Beginning here, however, and continuing to Contemplacio's epilogue, the simple double quatrain stanza is used. This is the part that seems to belong to the original play and not to the Virgin play. The first and last stanzas in Contemplacio's epilogue are in tumbling verse, but it seems doubtful if those between are.

This play marks the end of the Virgin cycle.

### *The Trial of Joseph and Mary*

This play is very different in tone and spirit from the other plays in the cycle. The interest seems to center upon the coarse horse-play of the slanderers, which must have been a later development, but surely not ecclesiastical in origin. The Prologue to this play, as noted before, is a simple quatrain. It does not adequately represent the play, but simply speaks of the fact that Joseph and Mary were slandered and went to their purgation. The purgation scene itself is simple and reverent enough and may possibly have been a part of the original cycle.

The introductory speech of Den, with its long list of alliterative and allegorical names, is written into the manuscript in a different hand before the figure 14 occurs and belongs probably to a later period. It is followed by the direction, "*Hic intrabit pagentum de purgatione, etc.*" This is the only place in the cycle proper where a play is introduced as a pageant.

<sup>31</sup> Halliwell, p. 124, ll. 13-16.

<sup>32</sup> Hemingway, *English Nativity Plays*, p. 255.



The stage-directions are all written in Latin. Metrically also the play is very simple. Den's introductory speech represents a return to the linked ballad measure, a a a b c c c b, but is a little irregular. The rest of the play is written in simple double quatrains, ending with a simple quatrain. There is no appearance of tumbling meter.

The return of the name "Abiyacher" for the bishop rather than "Ysaker" in this play is interesting and may be regarded as an additional piece of evidence that this play does not belong to the Virgin play. However, the name is only written in parenthetically in one of the stage-directions and nowhere in the play is the bishop called Abiyacher. He is always termed Episcopus. It is possible that when the scribe was writing this play he noticed that in the general Prologue to the play of the Betrothal the bishop had been called by this name, and so he ascribed it to him here.

#### *Joseph and the Midwives*

This play may have come into the cycle at the same time as the preceding play, for like that play it is represented in the general Prologue by a simple quatrain. This Prologue simply states that Joseph shall go for midwives. But the play presents the journey to Bethlehem (including the Cherry-tree episode), the birth of Christ, the punishment of Salome, etc. The Cherry-tree episode<sup>33</sup> is written in the tumbling meter, whereas the rest of the play is in simple double quatrains. This appearance of the tumbling meter, as well as the use of the legends from the life of Mary, the mentioning of the bright light that surrounds the stable, etc., might relate this play to the Virgin play. But there is no appearance of Contemplacio, or of English stage-directions; nor does it contain any distinctly ecclesiastical material, such as church ritual and elaborate ceremonies. I think it can hardly belong to that play, but that it came into the cycle earlier from some other source, as suggested before in the discussion of Mary's Visit to Elizabeth.

#### *The Adoration of the Shepherds*

With the exception that the Prologue provides for the actual nativity in this play, an explanation of which has been suggested before, the correspondence between Prologue and play is very close. The tone of the play is dignified and reverent in contrast to the Shepherds' plays of other cycles. It seems that the one case where the shepherds seek to imitate the angels' song must be a later borrowing, for it is out of keeping with the rest of the play. This part of the play presents an interruption of the meter which would seem to confirm such a theory. The main body of the play is written in the ballad measure, a a a b c c c b, with two stanzas in the prologue meter;

<sup>33</sup> Halliwell, pp. 145, 146.

but the part in which the shepherds imitate the angels is in single quatrains.

As in the Towneley and York cycles, the shepherds here also quote from the prophecies.<sup>34</sup> In the Chester play<sup>35</sup> one of the shepherds says, "The prophets did tell thou shold be our succour." But there is no direct quotation of prophecies.<sup>36</sup>

### *The Adoration of the Magi*

The action in this play is somewhat elaborated, written in a sort of pompous mock-heroic style, with frequent alliteration in Herod's speeches, and much variation of meter. But the first part of the play up to the departure of the three kings from Herod's court, follows very closely the action prescribed in the Prologue. It seems strange that the Prologue makes no mention of the actual adoration of the Christ child, and of the angel's warning to the three kings. However, it may be that this was taken for granted and is implicit in the gifts.

The basal meter of the play seems to be the ballad strophe which occurs in both long- and short-line stanzas. One of Herod's speeches is in the prologue measure, but in his introductory speech Herod employs the tumbling line.

The part of Herod's speech beginning "He is yong and I am olde" and continuing to the line, "Herowdys to the devyl he tryste,"<sup>37</sup> is written in a different hand.

### *The Purification*

The Purification play is a very simple biblical play, but its omission in the Prologue, as well as the fact that the action in the following play seems to follow immediately upon that of the Three Kings, would seem to indicate that it belongs to the later additions. As it now stands, it may be that its introduction between the two parts of the Herod play, as a sort of interlude, indicates a stationary stage.

Here again we have the appearance of English stage-directions which are used almost exclusively throughout the play; whereas in the two parts of the Herod play the directions are all Latin.

The entire play is written in the same form of meter that is used in part of the play of Joseph's Trouble about Mary. This verse-form, our fifth type of verse, a a b a a b b c b c, is not used elsewhere in the cycle.

<sup>34</sup> See the table given in the discussion of the *Processus Prophetarum*.

<sup>35</sup> *Chester*, E. E. T. S., p. 155, l. 568.

<sup>36</sup> Folio 91b in the manuscript which follows the play of the Shepherds contains a number of scratchings but is otherwise blank. Much of the writing is illegible, but the name William Dere can clearly be made out and occurs three times on this page. The name John Taylphott of parish Bedinton is also written here.

<sup>37</sup> Halliwell, pp. 168-170.



On folio 100b of the manuscript, which is the last page of the play, occurs the date 1468, written in the margin and apparently by the scribe. Upon this fact is based the belief that the greater part of the manuscript was written at this time.

### *Slaughter of the Innocents*

This play as it now stands includes the Flight into Egypt, the Slaughter of the Innocents, and the Death of Herod. The Prologue divides these scenes into two pageants, including in the first the Flight into Egypt and the Slaughter; and in the second the Death of Herod. This would seem to be a logical division and is probably the way it occurred in the original cycle. Death is mentioned in the Prologue as an allegorical figure, so that there seems to be no reason to believe that allegorical figures must of necessity be later additions.

This play presents two forms of meter. The second and fourth stanzas of the play, which constitute the boastful parts of Herod's first speech, are in the prologue meter; also the banqueting scene and the death of Herod. The rest of the play is in the ballad measure, long- and short-line forms being used interchangeably, the short lines usually for the soldiers' speeches.

At the end of the play there are two folios of the manuscript, 105 and 105b, left blank.

We have then in this Nativity group a number of plays, the meter and style of which seem to indicate that they come from various sources. Chief among the later additions to the cycle is a very elaborate Virgin play which must undoubtedly be ecclesiastical in origin. Though essentially a unit, as it now stands in the cycle it is divided into five separate plays: (1) The Barrenness of Anna, (2) Mary's Presentation in the Temple, (3) Mary's Betrothal, (4) The Salutation, and (5) Mary's Visit to Elizabeth. The first, second, and fourth of these have probably come into the cycle as entirely new. The third seems in all essentials a play belonging to the original cycle with possible touches here and there from the ecclesiastical source. The fifth is largely new, but seems also to contain elements of an old play. The Trial of Joseph and Mary, Joseph and the Midwives, and the Purification also represent later additions to the cycle, though not springing from the same ecclesiastical source.

Metrically the group presents, in addition to the forms of verse used in the Old Testament plays (the prologue verse, single and double quatrains, the ballad stanza), a new form a b a a b b c b c which is found only in Joseph's Trouble about Mary and the Purification. The tumbling meter also plays a considerable part in the ecclesiastical group of plays. After that it

occurs only in the Cherry-tree episode and in Herod's introductory speech in the play of the Magi.

English stage-directions make their first appearance also in the plays of the Virgin, and are used in all of these except Mary's Betrothal. They also appear again in the Purification, but otherwise the directions are in Latin.

## GROUP III

- |                                  |                               |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| xxi. Christ and the Doctors      | xxiii. The Temptation         |
| xxii. Baptism of Jesus           | xxiv. Woman Taken in Adultery |
| xxv. The Resurrection of Lazarus |                               |

## PROLOGUE

## PLAYS

*Christ and the Doctors*

xviii.

xxi.

(20)

Christ at twelve years of age disputed with the doctors and overcame them. They marveled.

Three days he was gone from his mother. She sought him about Jerusalem.

Preliminary conversation: Two doctors boast of their learning; Jesus rebukes them and they make fun of him.

Dispute: Jesus asks them how the world was made. They discuss the Trinity, Christ's divinity, the prophecies of his birth, etc. Jesus explains that Mary was wedded to Joseph in order to deceive the devil, and so that she would not have to go alone into Egypt.

Mary and Joseph enter, find Jesus and take him home. The doctors worship him.

*The Baptism of Jesus*

xix.

xxii.<sup>38</sup>

(21)

John shall baptize Jesus in Jordan. The Spirit descends; the voice of God.

The Spirit shall lead Him to the wilderness to stay forty days.

John preaches in the wilderness.

"Ecce vox clamantis, etc."

"Penitenciam nunc agite!

Appropinquabit regnum coelorum."

Jesus approaches and asks John to baptize him.

John protests.

Baptism proper. Spirit descends; the voice of God; John's testimony.

Jesus says he is going into the wilderness for forty days, led of the Spirit.

John preaches to the people.

<sup>38</sup> The MS. has no number here.

*The Temptation*

xx.

Council in hell, wonder  
who Jesus is, send  
Satan to tempt him  
in three sins;

But Christ answered  
them all.

xxiii.

Council in hell. Satan is puzzled about Christ,  
consults with Belial and Beelzebub. They de-  
cide to test him, in the three sins to which man  
is most prone. Satan is to tempt him.

Jesus appears soliloquizing; says he has fasted forty  
days, etc.

The temptation: (1) stones to bread; (2) fall from  
pinnacle of Temple; (3) kneel to Satan. Jesus  
sends away Satan who is much grieved and puz-  
zled.

Angels minister to Jesus.

Jesus preaches resistance to temptation.

(22)

*The Woman Taken in Adultery*

"xxist pagent shall be of a  
woman taken in adul-  
tery."

xxiv.

Jesus' long speech; urges repentance; talks of  
God's mercy.

Pharisees conceive a  
plan to convict  
Christ. If he show  
the woman mercy, he  
is against the law of  
Moses. If he con-  
demn her, he is in-  
consistent with his  
own preaching.

Conspiracy. Scribe and Pharisee are angry with  
Christ, decide that they must trap him. Accusa-  
tor comes in and tells them about the woman.

(23)

Scene at the woman's house. The woman before  
Jesus; customary scene. Jesus writes on the  
ground while the Scribe and Pharisee accuse. "He  
that is without sin, etc." They grow ashamed  
and leave. Jesus speaks to the woman, gives a  
little talk on repentance.

*The Resurrection of Lazarus*

xxii.

The greatest miracle  
that Jesus wrought  
was the resurrection  
of Lazarus, in whose  
house he often vis-  
ited.

Lazarus was dead for  
four days,

xxv.

Lazarus is ill; his sisters and four consolatores  
seek to comfort him, but Lazarus asks for Jesus.  
Fourth consolator and Nuncius go for Jesus.  
Lazarus dies and is buried.

Jesus and the messengers; says he will come; walks  
with disciples.

Messengers bring Christ's answer to Mary and  
Martha.

Jesus arrives; they go to the tomb; Lazarus awak-  
ened. Jesus says he must go to his passion.

And on the fourth day  
awakened by Jesus.

(24)

As far as incident and correspondence with the Prologue are concerned this group of plays is even more simple than the Old Testament group. There is no appearance of the tumbling meter, nor any clear evidence of incidents which have been added to the original cycle. There are, however, certain elements of style and general tone in two of the plays, *Christ and the Doctors* and the *Woman Taken in Adultery*, which seem to indicate a later period. The theological discussions between Christ and the doctors, such as the explanations of the Trinity, the Virgin birth, the statement that Mary was wedded to Joseph in order to deceive the devil, and others,<sup>39</sup> sound too sophisticated for an early stage of the plays and recall the ecclesiastical tone of the Nativity plays. The play of the Doctors in the York, Towneley, and Chester cycles is much more simple, and is one and the same play.<sup>40</sup> In all of these the doctors are discussing the sacredness of Moses' law, and Jesus, after he has told them that he has been taught by the Holy Spirit, recites the ten commandments. In the Towneley cycle this is preceded by a discussion, by the doctors, of the prophecies concerning Christ; and in the Chester play the doctors mention these prophecies after Jesus has left. But in none of these cycles is there any discussion of theological doctrines such as we find in our play.

The parts of the play of the *Woman Taken in Adultery* that are specifically covered in the Prologue are written in a quiet, reverent tone; but the elaboration in the first part of the play, particularly the scene at the woman's house, introduces much the same coarse, boisterous style that we have already noted in the *Trial of Joseph and Mary*. Both plays are written prevailingly in the same meter, namely, the simple double quâtrain verse.

There seems to be nothing particularly noteworthy about the play of the *Baptism* as far as style and content are concerned, except possibly that the large number of Latin quotations may indicate an early stage.

In the play of the *Temptation* it seems strange that the Prologue makes no mention of the Angel's ministering to Jesus after the temptation; otherwise, however, there is an exact correspondence between the two.

An interesting consideration in the *Lazarus* play is the rapid shifting of scene from the house of Lazarus and his sisters to the place where Jesus is resting with his disciples. Then we have Jesus with his disciples walking through Judea; then a scene at the house of Lazarus again and, finally, the scene at the tomb. In this respect the play reminds one of the play of the *Last Supper*, where the scene of action alternates between the room where Jesus and the disciples are eating the last supper and the council chamber; though the action here is much less elaborate and there is

<sup>39</sup> On this point, see *York*, p. 94, ll. 25-32; *Chester*, p. 154, l. 538.

<sup>40</sup> *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, E. E. T. S., edited by Hardin Craig, Introduction.



nothing in the stage-directions to indicate definitely a stationary stage, as in the later play.

Metrically this group of plays is extremely simple, only two forms of meter being used. Three of the plays, Christ and the Doctors, the Woman Taken in Adultery, and Lazarus, are written entirely in simple double quatrains; and the other two, the Baptism and the Temptation, entirely in the prologue meter.

In this part of the cycle there are no indications from stage-directions or from the manuscript, such as were found in the Old Testament plays, that the group was considered as a unit. On the contrary there is at least one blank page left between each two of the plays; and the three plays that are written in the double quatrain measure are introduced by a stage-direction somewhat in the nature of an "Incipit." Thus the Doctors' play is introduced by this direction, "Modo de doctoribus disputantibus cum Jhesu in templo," and ends with an "Amen." The Woman Taken in Adultery begins "Hic de muliere in adulterio deprehensa," and ends with an "Amen." And finally the Lazarus play begins with the direction, "Hic incipit de suscitacione Lazari," but does not, however, end with an "Amen."

With the other two plays, the Baptism and the Temptation, both of which are written in the prologue meter, the case seems to be different. Although there is a page and a half left blank between them in the manuscript, the stage-directions would seem to indicate that they were acted together. On the folio in the manuscript where the play of the Baptism begins<sup>41</sup> (folio 112), there is no "Incipit," but on folio 111b, which aside from a few other scribbles is left blank, we have the direction, "Hic Incipit Johannes Baptysta." There is no "Amen" in this play, nor any "Incipit" in the Temptation, but the latter play ends with an "Amen." But more significant is, I believe, the stage-direction near the end of the play of the Baptism, after Jesus has said that he is led of the Spirit to go to the wilderness, "Hic Jhesus transit in desertum, dicens, etc."<sup>42</sup> Then follows a short speech by Jesus in which he says that he is going to fast in the desert for forty days and nights; after which comes John's sermon. The Temptation play then opens with the council in hell.

The manuscript in this part of the cycle presents some interesting peculiarities, the most important of which is the fact that the first speech of John the Baptist in the play of the Baptism<sup>43</sup> is written in a different hand, which may possibly be of the same general period, but not of the same scribe as that of the rest of the cycle. This new hand is, I believe, the same as that noted in the play of the Magi. After this speech the name "Jhesus" is written as the next speaker in this same hand, but Jesus' speech begins on the next page in the scribe's own hand.

<sup>41</sup> Halliwell, p. 199.

<sup>42</sup> Halliwell, p. 203.

<sup>43</sup> Halliwell, pp. 199, 200.

On folio 111b of the manuscript, we have in addition to the "Hic incipit Johannes Baptysta," the name "John Kinge the yownger" written in a later hand together with another scribble that I have not yet been able to decipher. Folios 119b, 120, 121, and 126b also contain minor scribbles; but as far as I have been able to read them, they do not seem to be of any great significance.

The stage-directions of this entire group are very simple and without exception in Latin.

#### GROUP IV

- |                                    |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| xxvi. Council of Jews and Entry    | xxxv. Release of Souls from Hell |
| xxvii. The Last Supper and Council | and Report of Watch              |
| xxviii. The Betrayal               | xxxvi. The Three Marys           |
| xxix. Herod and Trial, Pt. I       | xxxvii. Mary Magdalen            |
| xxx. Trial, Pt. II                 | xxxviii. Peregrini and Thomas    |
| xxxi. Pilate's Wife's Dream and    | xxxix. Ascension                 |
| Condemnation                       | xl. Pentecost                    |
| xxxii. Crucifixion                 | xli. Assumption of Virgin        |
| xxxiii. Harrowing of Hell          | xlii. Judgment                   |
| xxxiv. Burial and Setting of the   |                                  |
| Watch                              |                                  |

#### PROLOGUE

#### PLAYS

##### *The Council of the Jews and Entry*

xxvi. Demon's Prologue. Says he is Lucifer who came (25) out of hell, prince of this world, etc. His mission is to ruin men and torture them in hell.

He tells the story of his fall; he took one-third of the angels with him. He thinks nothing of getting one thousand souls in an hour. But now he is troubled about Christ. He has tried to tempt him, but failed (mentions the three temptations). He is worried about Christ's growing popularity, raising Lazarus and forgiving Magdalen, and resolves to seek to confuse him when the time for his persecution comes; to bring false witnesses, induce his disciples to forsake him and thus to be revenged.

Then he addresses himself to the people, urges them to follow him, promises rewards, instructs them.



John the Baptist appears, prophesies of Christ, "One shall come after me, etc.," and preaches a long sermon.

Annas appears, is troubled about Christ. Two doctors advise him to consult with Caiaphas and Rewfyn and Leyon. He sends Arfexe for these men.

Caiaphas and his doctors appear; he also expresses his anxiety about Christ. His doctors advise him to consult with Annas.

Annas' messenger enters; in the meantime Rewfyn and Leyon appear "in the place." The messenger speaks first to Caiaphas and then to the other two men. They send back word that they are coming to Annas' court.

The messenger delivers this message to Annas. Annas goes down to meet Caiaphas and his followers.

The council scene in the "myd-place." Annas welcomes them. They consult and resolve that Jesus must be put to death. They decide to stay nine days to discuss by what means his death is to be brought about.

Jesus speaks. "The time of mercy is at hand, etc." (26) He sends his disciples to "yon castle." They go, meet the "Burgensis" who asks why they take the beasts. Philip replies. They bring the two animals to Christ.

"Here Christ rides out of the place," and Peter and John remain to preach to the people. Peter: "O, pepyl dyspeyryng, be glad." John corroborates Peter's message; tells them Jesus is now coming to the city; bids them prepare to meet him.

Four citizens prepare to meet Christ. They meet him and cast their garments before him.

The children come with flowers singing, "Gloria Laus."

xxiii. The twenty-third pageant shall be of Palm Sunday. We shall show how the children of the Hebrews scattered flowers before Christ.

Jesus speaks. The first four lines of this speech are a repetition of his earlier speech at the opening of the entry scene.

Two blind paupers are healed.

*The Last Supper and Continuation of Council*

xxiv.

xxvii. Jesus proceeds on foot with his disciples. He weeps over Jerusalem.

Peter and John ask Jesus where he wishes to keep the Passover. Jesus directs them to go to Simon.

(27)

Christ and his disciples  
shall keep the  
maundy of God.

And Judas shall sell  
Christ for thirty  
pieces of silver.

xxv.

Christ shall pray to  
God for relief.

Judas shall kiss him to  
betray him.

His disciples forsake  
him and let him  
stand among his foes.

They go to Simon's house and see to the preparations.

Christ enters, saying that he takes this way for the love of man. Simon welcomes him.

Christ and the apostles enter and eat the paschal lamb.

Council scene ("in counsell-hous beforn seyð").

They have been unsuccessful so far; they must find a better plan. Caiaphas: "Better that one man die, etc." Gamaliel, Rewfyn, and Leyon speak.

Mary Magdalene enters, weeps at Jesus' feet. Jesus expels seven devils. She pours ointment on his feet. Judas objects.

Jesus speaks to the disciples and to Mary of one who is about to betray him. They all ask, "Is it I?" etc.

Judas leaves secretly; soliloquizes, resolves to go to the council and to betray Christ.

He greets the doctors in council and tells his errand. They offer him thirty pieces of silver. Judas takes his leave, says he must go back to his master. The council breaks up.

Jesus is talking to his disciples about the Passover. The sacrament of the Last Supper instituted, etc. Offers the bread to all the disciples including Judas.

Judas goes out again; the devil meets him and greets him as his own.

Jesus speaks: "Now is the Son of Man glorified." Peter is warned that he is to deny his master. The foot-washing.

Stage-direction, "Here Jesus goeth Bethany-ward and his disciples following, Jesus saying."

### *The Betrayal*

xxviii. Jesus speaks to his disciples on the way to the (28) garden.

They enter the garden and Jesus asks Peter to stay with the disciples and wait for him while he goes to pray. He goes away three times and returns, finds his disciples sleeping, etc.

The Angel ministers to him, bringing him chalice and host.

Judas comes with the soldiers. They fall back when Jesus tells them that it is he whom they seek. Judas kisses Jesus. Peter strikes Malchus. They lead Jesus away. Gamaliel, Leyon, and Rewfyn mock Jesus.

The two Marys come in and weep.

*Trial, Part I, Herod, Trial before Caiaphas, Peter's Denial*

Doctors' Prologue. Expositor says, "To the people (29) unlearned I stand as a teacher, and to the learned as a preacher, etc." The apostles appear in procession and are introduced: Peter, prince and president, and Andrew, these two first followed Christ; James and John, two luminaries, given by their mother to Christ in Jerusalem; Philip, who converted the Samaritan, converted the treasurer of Queen Cabdas; James the lesser, first partaker of the ordenance of Cephas; Matthew, apostle and evangelist, called to the flock of ghostly conversation; Bartholemew, who fled all carnal conversation; Simon Zelotes and Judas, who both loved our Lord; Paul, great doctor of faith; Thomas, Christ's wound was his reflection; John the Baptist, highest of prophets, a voice crying in the desert.

xxix.<sup>44</sup>

Herod, Pilate, Annas, and Caiaphas enter and take their scaffolds.

Another expositor in doctor's weeds, Contemplacio, enters. He hails the audience, "May the maiden's son preserve you, etc." We shall proceed with the matter that we left last year; the passion shall be shown. *Last year* we showed: (1) Jesus's coming to Jerusalem, (2) His maunde, (3) His betrayal by Judas, and capture by soldiers. *Now* he is brought before Annas and Caiaphas and later before Pilate, and so forth in his passion. Here Herod shows himself and speaks a boastful speech. He is a follower of Mahownde and hates Christians. He had John the Baptist killed because he baptized Christ. Sends soldiers out to bring in any Christian dogs they may find. They go. He vows to put to the most shameful death any who disobey him. He wishes to see Jesus, tells the soldiers to bring Christ before him, if Jesus should ever come to that country. The soldiers say they will begin their search tomorrow.

xxvi.

A messenger enters "the place," crying "Tidings, (30) Jesus is taken, etc." He tells the story of the capture.

Christ shall be brought  
before Caiaphas. The  
Jews are witnesses.  
Peter's denial.

Jesus is brought before Annas and Caiaphas. The Jews testify; he is questioned, beaten, etc. Caiaphas tears his clothes, etc.

Peter's denial. The cock crows, Peter goes out to weep.

<sup>44</sup> This number does not occur in the manuscript until after this prologue; see note on manuscript below.

*Trial, Part II, The Remorse of Judas, Jesus before Pilate and before Herod*

xxvii. Pilate shall sit in state. Jesus shall be brought before him *with other thieves. Pilate's wife goes to rest.*

xxviii. Judas shall weep because he has sold Jesus, bring his money back and hang himself. *His soul is taken to hell.*

xxx. Caiaphas sends a messenger to Pilate. The messenger appears before Pilate.

The remorse of Judas. He offers the money to the priests; it is refused; he throws it down and goes to hang himself.

Jesus is led before Pilate. Annas, Caiaphas, and Doctors accuse him. The usual trial scene follows.

Pilate learns that Jesus is from Galilee and sends him to Herod.

Trial before Herod. Herod appears in state. He questions Jesus, seeks to induce him to speak, but without success. He orders Jesus clad in fool's garments after he has been beaten; sends him back to Pilate.

"Here enteryth Satan into the place in the most orryble wyse, and qwyl that he pleyth, thei xal don on Jhesus clothis and overest a whyte clothe, and ledyn hym abowth the place, and than to Pylat, be the tyme that hese wyf hath pleyd."

*Trial, Part III, Pilate's Wife's Dream and the Condemnation*

xxix.

xxxi. Satan boasts of his power, but is troubled because he has failed in his attempt to tempt Christ. He is still angry for the rebuke that Jesus gave him in the wilderness. He vows that he will have him crucified and brought to hell. He speaks to his vassals in hell, tells them to forge some particularly strong chains to bind Christ. The demons object, they are afraid to have Jesus in hell. Satan considers that it might possibly be dangerous to bring him there, so he decides to go to Pilate's wife. (31)

Pilate's wife shall appear sleeping, and the devil shall appear to her and attempt to save Christ's life.

She sends to Pilate and begs him not to condemn Christ.

Then Pilate is busy and right "blyff."

Here the devil goes to Pilate's wife, "and he xal no dene make," but after he is come in, she shall make a "rewly" noise and run to the scaffold where Pilate is "like a mad woman."

She urges Pilate to befriend Jesus. Satan told her that he who condemns Jesus shall be damned.

Pilate thanks her and sends her back.

Pilate gives counsel to save Christ's life; but the Jews demand his death and the release of Barabas.

The doctors bring Jesus back to Pilate. He seeks (32) to persuade them to let Jesus go. Offers to set free Barabas or Jesus. Examines Jesus alone. Annas and Caiaphas threaten to bring the matter before Caesar.

Sentence passed. Jesus, the two thieves, and Barabas before the bar. Barabas is freed; Jesus and thieves condemned to be beaten and crucified. The two thieves are Dysmas and Jesmas (Dimas and Gestas).

A stage-direction for the beating and the crowning with thorns as well as for the weeping of the women.

*The Crucifixion*

xxx.

xxxii. Two women weep for Jesus; he speaks to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, etc."

Simon appears and is forced to carry the cross.

Veronica wipes Jesus' face with her kerchief. Jesus blesses her and gives magic power to the kerchief.

They shall beat Christ and nail him upon a tree, between two thieves.

Crucifixion proper, realistic description of the nailing to the cross, etc. They crucify the two thieves.

Christ speaks seven words on the cross.

John and the three Marys come in and mourn at the cross.

"Forgive them, Father."

Dysmas is forgiven.

Jesus says to his mother, "Woman, behold thy son, etc."

Pilate and the high priests come in. Pilate's inscription.

Jesus: "Eloi eloi, etc."

"I thirst, etc."

"Into Thy hands, etc."

"It is finished."

John comforts Mary and takes her to the Temple.

Mary and John leave the cross and go to the Temple.

*The Harrowing of Hell*

xxxi. Longinus episode. A spear pierced Christ's heart and Longinus was healed. (See next play.)

xxxiii.

(33)

Christ's soul goes to hell and overcomes the fiend.

Jesus speaks: "All mankind in heart be glad, etc."

He tells the story of his crucifixion and says he shall rise again.



Anima: "Against me it were but foolish to hold portas, etc."

Belial: "Out and harrow."

Anima Christi goes to hell and says, "Attollite out, etc."

*Burial and the Setting of the Watch*

xxxii.

Joseph and Nicodemus ask Pilate for Christ's body. He consents.

The Jews ask for a watch.

Pilate sends four knights to guard the tomb.

But Christ's body shall rise from the grave nevertheless and frighten the watch.  
(See next play.)

xxxiv. The Centurion, two other soldiers, and Nicodemus are at the cross. They are convinced of Christ's divinity.

Joseph of Arimathea goes to Pilate and asks permission to bury Jesus. The request is granted and Pilate sends two soldiers with Joseph to see if Jesus is really dead.

Longinus episode: At the cross the soldiers see Longinus and force him to pierce Christ's side. The blood runs over his hands; he wipes his eyes and is healed. He worships Christ. (See Prologue, section number xxxi.)

Joseph and Nicodemus take the body from the cross. They lay the body in Mary's lap. She weeps over her son.

They place him in the grave and place a stone before it.

Mary is left at the tomb.

Caiaphas asks Pilate to place a watch at the tomb.

Pilate calls four soldiers and sends them to the grave. They boast of their courage.

Pilate sets his seal on the stone.

Pilate, Annas, and Caiaphas go to their scaffolds, and the soldiers are left at the tomb. They take their places and then fall asleep.

"Tunc dormient milites et veniet Anima Christi de inferno, cum Adam et Eva, Abraham, John Baptist, et aliis."

*Harrowing of Hell and Report of the Watch*

xxxiii. Christ shall bring his friends from hell to paradise.

The soul then goes to the tomb and enters the body.

xxxv. Anima speaks: Come forth, Adam and Eve, etc."

Adam, Eve, John the Baptist, and Abraham in turn express their gratitude.

Anima then binds the devil and Belial laments.

"Tunc transit anima Christi ad resuscitandum corpus, quo resuscitato, dicat Jesus: 'Harde gatys have I gon, etc.'"

(35)



Then he goes to his  
mother in the Tem-  
ple to comfort her.  
She rejoices.

Jesus salutes his mother: "Salve, sancta parens,  
etc." Mary rejoices.

The watch awakens, is frightened, reports to Pilate  
and is bribed. (See Prologue xxxii.)

*The Three Marys*

xxxiv. The three Marys  
seek the tomb.  
The Angel tells them  
Christ is risen.

They go and tell the  
news to the disciples.  
Peter and John run to  
the grave and find  
that Christ is not  
there.

xxxvi. Mary Magdalene, Mary Jacobi, Mary Salome (36)  
talk to each other on the way to the grave.  
Mary Magdalene looks into the grave and finds  
Jesus gone. The Angel tells them he is risen  
and bids them bring the news to the apostles.  
Mary Magdalene and Mary Jacobi tell Peter and the  
other disciples.

Peter and John run to the grave, each enters in  
turn and finds the grave clothes laid away in  
place.

Peter speaks to all the disciples gathered together  
("omnes congregatus Thomas").

*Mary Magdalene*

xxxv.

Mary Magdalene shall  
see Christ, whom she  
believes to be a gar-  
dener.

When Christ calls her  
by name, she recog-  
nizes him. He bids  
her not touch him.

Mary then goes to the  
disciples and tells  
them the truth.

xxxvii. Mary Magdalene stands outside the grave (37)  
weeping. The Angel seeks to comfort her. She  
walks away.

Hortulanus scene. She meets Jesus and thinks he  
is the gardener.<sup>45</sup> He calls her by name and she  
recognizes him. "Do not touch me, etc." Mary  
rejoices.

She tells the disciples that she has seen Christ.

*Peregrini and Thomas*

xxxvi. Cleophas and Luke  
go to the castle  
mourning Christ.  
Christ overtakes them  
And expounds the  
prophets.

xxxviii. Cleophas and Luke on the way to Emmaus are (38)  
discussing the death of Christ.

Jesus overtakes them. They tell him the story and  
also about the women's testimony.  
Jesus expounds the prophets to them.

<sup>45</sup> There is no mention of his carrying a spade or anything to symbolize a gardener.

He goes with them into the house, and, at the breaking of the bread, disappears.

Scene in the house. Jesus blesses the bread, etc., and disappears before their eyes.

xxxvii. To Thomas of India Christ shall appear, and Thomas shall touch his wounds.

Cleophas and Luke go to the disciples and tell them the story. Peter rejoices and urges Thomas to believe. But Thomas says he will not believe until he has seen the wounds of Christ.

Christ enters, "Peace be among you, etc."

He shows Thomas his wounds and Thomas believes and repents of his unbelief.

#### *The Ascension*

xxxviii.

Christ shall ascend into heaven; all his apostles shall be there and be very sad.

Two angels shall comfort them and tell them that he shall come again.

xxxix. Jesus speaks: "Peace be with you, etc." Tells them to stay in Jerusalem. He ascends. (39)

One angel comes to comfort them, tells them that Jesus will return, etc.

[Peter] tells them to elect another disciple. They draw lots and Matthew is chosen.

#### *Pentecost*

xxxix. The apostles were gathered in Jerusalem, praying.

The Holy Ghost came upon them; they spoke in all tongues.

And later they departed.

xl. The apostles are kneeling and praying in Jerusalem. (40)

The spirit descends upon them, "Et omnes osculant terram."

The Jews mock them and Peter gives his defense.

#### *The Assumption of the Virgin*

xli. "Ad mea facta pater assit Deus et sua mater." (41)

Doctor says that St. John has written of this Assumption in a book called the Apocrypha. He tells the story of Mary's life; how at fourteen, she conceived Christ, lived with him for thirty-three years, and after his death twelve years; so that now she was three-score years. "Legenda Sanctorum" authorizes this truly. She lived in Sion after her Son's ascension and visited all the places where Christ had been; Jordan, where he was baptized, the place where he was captured, and where he was buried and, finally, where he ascended.

Upon inquiry the Episcopus learns that while there is comparative peace in the land since Jesus was slain, his mother is still living and has a number of followers who travel about the country preaching that Jesus is still living. They do not dare to put these people to death, for fear that the commons will rise. But they resolve at Mary's death to burn her body and to slay the apostles.

Mary in the Temple prays that she may be delivered from this life. Sapientia hears her prayer, sends an angel down to tell his mother that in three days she shall ascend to the presence of God. Mary asks that the apostles may be present when she dies and that she may not see the fiend. The Angel ascends. Mary tells her two maidens; she goes to her house.

Suddenly John appears at Mary's house, carried there in a cloud. Mary tells John how the Jews have planned to burn her body and asks him to prevent it.

Here suddenly all the apostles appear before the gates. (The stage-direction says all the apostles; but Peter and Paul are the only ones who take any part in the conversation or action. These two also come in clouds.) They meet John and he explains to them why they were brought there.

Mary's deathbed. Each apostle lights a candle and watches at the bedside. Jesus descends to comfort his mother, accompanied by a heavenly choir. Mary dies while the choir sings. Two virgins care for the body.

Funeral procession. Peter, Paul, and John carry the bier. Chorus of angels sings. Peter: *Exiit Israel de Egipto. Apostoli: "Facta est Judea sanctificatio ejus, etc."*

The Jewish leaders learn that Mary is being buried. Three men are sent to capture her body. They attack the apostles but are miraculously stricken with some disease and two of them run away. One of them makes bold to touch the bier and his hand becomes fastened to it. He prays Peter to help him. Peter bids him believe and kneel before the bier. He does this and is healed. Peter gives him a palm and tells him to take this and preach repentance to the other Jews.

They place the body in the tomb and have a service there.

The Jewish princeps who has been healed holds his palm up before the other Jews and bids them believe that they may be made well. One of them touches the palm and is cured. But the other

refuses to forsake the law, and the devils come and carry him off to hell.

Jesus and the angels descend to the apostles. Mary's spirit again enters the body and they ascend together. Jesus crowns her queen of heaven and mother of mercy.

*The Judgment*

xl.

The earth shall quake  
and graves open.  
Dead men shall answer  
before God's face.

"Whoso to God has  
been unkind, Friendship  
there shall not find."

xlii. Jesus descends with Michael and Gabriel and the two angels summon men to judgment. (42)

"Omnes resurgentes subitus terram clamavit 'Ha! a! a!' Deinde surgentes dicat, 'ha! a! a!'"

All the demons call "Harrow and owt."

Deus to the blessed: "Venite benedicti." Peter opens the gates of heaven and the souls of the saved enter.

The souls of the damned cry for mercy, the demons accuse them. Deus: "To hungry and thirsty, etc."

The devils go on accusing and the "dampnandi" ask for mercy.

Deus: .....

.....

.....

The play is incomplete.

In the fourth division of the cycle we have a great number of complications and evidence of late extraneous influence, somewhat analogous to those found in the Nativity plays. In the latter group there seemed to be a distinct unit, or group of plays, concerning the life of the Virgin, that had been incorporated, more or less completely, into the cycle. So here we see the influence of a Passion play, similar probably to those that often existed in the southern part of England. It is doubtful, however, whether this play was incorporated as a whole. The actual incidents as we now find them in the plays correspond fairly well with the general Prologue, and the additions seem to be more in the nature of elaborate processions and prologues. So that it is more probable that what we have in this part of the cycle is a working over into another form, after the pattern of some Passion play, of materials already present.

In the play numbered 26 (Halliwell 25), Lucifer appears and recites a long prologue in which he introduces himself and tells the story of his fall, and how now he is seeking to bring about the ruin of Christ. He ends with a detailed description of his costume. This is just such a prologue as was

often used to introduce Passion plays on the continent. Then follow the plays of the Council and Entry, the Last Supper, the Betrayal and Capture; after which comes, in the twenty-ninth play, another long prologue scene with doctors and expositors. At the end of this prologue scene, an expositor in doctor's weeds, *Contemplacio* by name, enters and says that they will now continue where they left off last year. He then mentions as plays performed last year, the Entry, the Maundy, the Betrayal and Capture, which is exactly what was covered since *Lucifer's* prologue. He goes on to say that now they will show how he was brought before Annas and Caiaphas and later before Pilate and so forth in his Passion. I think it impossible that this division into two parts should refer to the whole cycle, which would then be very unevenly divided; but rather that this expositor's speech belonged to the Passion play only. It certainly indicates, for this part of the cycle, an independent use at some time as a Passion play. The name *Contemplacio* may have been introduced by the scribe when he was copying, in an attempt to make this part of the cycle seem consistent with the Nativity plays.

The part of our cycle, covering the action prescribed by *Contemplacio*, presents a number of noteworthy differences from the rest of the cycle; such as the widespread use of the tumbling meter, and stage-directions that indicate the use of a fixed stage and are peculiarly explicit in matters of costume and properties. These directions are entirely in English down to the scene of Peter's denial. In this and a few of the following scenes certain traditional directions, such as "*Et cantabit gallus,*" are written in Latin, but English continues to be used prevailingly in the stage-directions to the end of the play of the Burial and the Setting of the Watch. From this point on, with but one single exception, the directions are entirely in Latin and are in the same simple form that we have found before in the plays covering Old Testament subjects, and the life of Christ up to the Passion. The use of the tumbling meter, with but one exception, also ends at this point. Moreover, in the manuscript these plays follow immediately upon one another without any blank spaces between them, except at the point that *Contemplacio* marks as the division in the Passion play, until the end of the play of the Appearance to Mary Magdalene. After that the blank spaces are left regularly at the end of each play as they have been in the other parts of the cycle that have appeared to be simple and unmodified.

Thus the meter and the stage-directions, as well as the fact that *Contemplacio* speaks only of the passion of Christ, and not of the resurrection, would seem to indicate that foreign influence ends with the play of the Burial and the Setting of the Watch; whereas the appearance of the manuscript might point to the Appearance to Mary Magdalene as the end.

Before proceeding to a discussion of individual plays it may be well to



indicate in an abbreviated form the variation of Halliwell's division of the plays from that of the manuscript. I have followed the manuscript.

MANUSCRIPT	HALLIWELL
26	Demon Prologue
	Council of the Jews
	The Entry
27	Jesus Weeping over Jerusalem
	The Last Supper and Continuation of Council
28	The Betrayal and Capture
29	The Doctors' Prologue
	Herod
	Trial before Caiaphas
30	Peter's Denial
	Remorse of Judas
	Jesus before Pilate
	Jesus before Herod
31	Pilate's Wife's Dream
	The Second Trial before Pilate
32	Weeping of the Women and Veronica
	Crucifixion



MANUSCRIPT		HALLIWELL
33	Harrowing of Hell I	33
	Burial and Longinus	34
34	Setting of the Watch	
	Harrowing of Hell II	35
35	Jesus Hails His Mother	
	Report of the Watch	
36	The Three Marys	36
37	Mary Magdalene	37
38	Peregrini and the Incredulity of Thomas	38

### *The Council and Entry*

The Prologue for this play provides for nothing more than Palm Sunday and the children, whereas the play presents in addition the introductory speeches of Lucifer and John the Baptist, the convening of the council, Peter's and John's sermons to the Jews, and the healing of the two blind men. On folio 142b of the manuscript, immediately after the council scene, appears this direction: "Here enteryth the apostyl Petyr and John the evangelist with him, Peter seyng." This and the following speech of Peter's is crossed out, and we have instead a speech by Jesus, in which he addresses himself first to the Jews, and then sends his disciples into the city, after which he leaves. When Christ has left, Peter and John begin to preach to the people, and here we have the speech by Peter that had been crossed out before. The direction, however, is not repeated. This may indicate, it seems to me, that in this place we had originally a very simple play of the entry, which began with Peter's speech and included simply the homage of the four citizens and the songs of the children. In this connection it is interesting to note that in Jesus' speech at the end of the play, just before the healing of the two blind men,<sup>46</sup> the first four lines are a repetition of his first speech.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Halliwell, p. 256.

This would leave the council scene, Jesus' two speeches, and the healing of the two blind men to be considered as later additions to the cycle.

The play is written largely in single and double quatrains, the latter prevailing. The tumbling measure also makes its frequent appearance, notably in the speeches of Demon, John the Baptist, and in Annas' first speech as well as those of his two doctors (to the top of page 246 in Halliwell). Two stanzas (on pages 246 and 247) where Caiaphas is speaking, just before the messenger from Annas appears, and also the last three stanzas of Peter's speech,<sup>48</sup> are also written in the tumbling verse.

The prologue stanza makes its appearance in the scene where Jesus asks his disciples to go into the city and in the conversation with the Burgensis, with the exception that the first four lines of Jesus' speech, which are repeated later, form a separate quatrain.

The following stage-direction from this play will serve to illustrate the peculiarities of the directions in this part of the cycle: "Here xal Annas shewyn hymself in his stage, be seyn after a busshop of the hoold lawe, in a skarlet gowne, and over that a blew tabbard furryd with whyte, and a mytere on his hed, after the hoold lawe; ij. doctorys stondyng by hym in furryd hodys, and on beforn hem with his staff of astat, and eche of hem on here hedys a furryd cappe, with a gret knop in the crowne, and on stondyng beforn as a Sarazyn, the wiche xal be his masangere."<sup>49</sup> This careful attention to the position and costumes of the characters is entirely foreign to the simple plays that precede this group. The elaborateness of the stage properties called for, the frequent mentions of "the place" indicate a fixed stage for this group of plays. Thus while the messenger is speaking to Caiaphas in his scaffold, Rewfyn and Leyon appear in "the place." And later "the buskopys with here clerkes and the Phariseus mett, in the *myd place*, and ther xal be a lytil oratory with stolys and cusschonys clenly beseyn, lyche as it were a cownsel-hous."<sup>50</sup> A little while later, after Christ has made his speech to the Jews, we are told that he rides out of "the place," etc. I have also noticed that, beginning with the direction concerning the citizens' homage to Jesus,<sup>51</sup> we have the frequent substitution of *qw* for *wh* in such words as *qwan* and *qwat*.<sup>52</sup>

### *The Last Supper and Continuation of Council*

This play also appears to have been very much modified. The Prologue provides for the Supper and for the selling of Christ by Judas, but not for the elaborate council scene which we find here. This, I think, must have been a part of the Passion play. It seems probable that the original play

<sup>47</sup> Halliwell, p. 252.

<sup>50</sup> Halliwell, p. 249.

<sup>48</sup> Halliwell, p. 254.

<sup>51</sup> Halliwell, p. 256.

<sup>49</sup> Halliwell, p. 244.

<sup>52</sup> In the manuscript the name Wyllum Dere is written in the margin of the first page of this play.

included simply the scene of the Supper and Judas' withdrawal, to meet either with the Jews or, possibly, the devil. Or it may be that he simply soliloquized. It is interesting to note that the stage-direction for the Demon's speech<sup>53</sup> states that this scene may be included or omitted at the pleasure of the performers.

That the Mary Magdalene episode is a later addition the manuscript indicates clearly. On folio 148b the direction, "Here Judas Caryoth comyth into the place,"<sup>54</sup> has been crossed out, also the name *Jesus* as the next speaker. At the bottom of the page three lines, "as a cursyd," "my herte is ryth," and "now cowntyrfetyd I have," have been written and crossed out. The first of these lines is the opening line of Mary's speech;<sup>55</sup> the second is the first line of Christ's speech after the Mary Magdalene episode,<sup>56</sup> introducing the scene where Jesus says one of his disciples shall betray him; the third line is the opening line of Judas' speech, which follows the scene between Jesus and his disciples.<sup>57</sup> Evidently the direction, "Here Judas goth into the place," which is crossed out in the manuscript, though printed by Halliwell (p. 263), is the same as that which precedes this last-mentioned speech of Judas.<sup>58</sup> This confusion would seem to me to indicate that the scribe had at first intended to introduce the scene where Judas sells Christ to the doctors, immediately after Annas' last speech,<sup>59</sup> and thus make of the council one continuous scene. Then later it seems that he thought to introduce the scene between Jesus and his disciples<sup>60</sup> at this point, but finally decided to introduce the Mary Magdalene episode. This episode occupies folios 149 and 149b in the manuscript, and the handwriting seems to indicate that it was written by the same scribe, but at a different time and with a different pen. It is much more closely written. Perhaps this indicates that at first the scene between Jesus and his disciples followed Annas' speech (p. 263) and that the story of Mary was written in at a later time on a blank page that had been left there.<sup>61</sup>

Metrically the play presents two main forms. The Mary Magdalene episode is in the prologue stanza, whereas the greater part of the play is in double quatrains. The scene between Jesus and his disciples, mentioned above, as well as the one where he establishes the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (pp. 270-274), are in the tumbling meter, which may point to a later origin for these parts. There are also three cases of couplets in the play (pp. 274, 276).

<sup>53</sup> Halliwell, p. 275.

<sup>56</sup> Halliwell, p. 265.

<sup>59</sup> Halliwell, p. 263.

<sup>54</sup> Halliwell, p. 263.

<sup>57</sup> Halliwell, p. 267.

<sup>60</sup> Halliwell, pp. 265-267.

<sup>55</sup> Halliwell, p. 263.

<sup>58</sup> Halliwell, p. 267.

<sup>61</sup> The name John Holland occurs four times in this section of the manuscript on folios 151b, 152b, 153b, and 155b. The handwriting resembles that of the scribe.

*The Betrayal*

The preceding play ends with the direction, "Here Jhesus goth to Betanyward, and his dyscipulys folwyng with sad contenawns, Jhesus seyng," and this play opens with Jesus' speech on the way to the garden. Either this direction ought to be transferred to this play, or the speech belongs to the play of the Last Supper. However, if we conceive these plays to have been performed on a stationary stage, considerations of this kind are of very little importance.<sup>62</sup>

The Angel's ministering to Jesus is not mentioned in the Prologue. His bringing a chalice and the host is a theological touch. Moreover, the Prologue says that Christ's disciples forsake him, but there is no direction in the play to that effect. The laments of the Marys are also omitted from the Prologue; and these laments are also written in the tumbling meter, whereas the rest of the play is in simple single and double quatrain stanzas.

*Trial I (Herod, Trial before Caiaphas and Peter's Denial)*

The play of the Betrayal ends on folio 162 of the manuscript and folio 162b is blank. The prologue of the doctors is written in on ff. 163 and 163b in a different hand; then, except for a few scribbles, ff. 164 and 164b are blank. So that the next play does not actually begin before folio 165, although the doctors' prologue does occur before; nor does the number 29 appear before this point. After this there are no blank spaces in the manuscript until the end of the play of Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene. The hand in which Contemplacio's speech is written seems to differ both from that of the usual scribe and also from that of the doctors' prologue.

The general Prologue for this play promises nothing more than a trial before Caiaphas and Peter's denial, and these portions of the play are written in simple meters. The actual trial before Caiaphas<sup>63</sup> is in simple quatrains, with a good deal of confusion of rhyme due to the short speeches in the buffeting scenes, etc.; the scene of Peter's denial is in couplets, ending in a simple quatrain. But the other parts of the play, Contemplacio's speech, the speeches of Herod and the soldiers, the messenger's tidings to Annas, Annas' greeting of Jesus, and Peter's lament are written almost entirely in tumbling quatrains. Thus it seems probable that all of the play except the actual trial before Caiaphas and Peter's denial is late.

The appearance of the stage-directions would also seem to support such a theory. In the first part of the play we find the same elaborate sort of directions that characterize this part of the cycle: "What tyme that processyon is enteryd into the place, and the Herowdys takyn his schaffalde,

<sup>62</sup> Hohlfeld also calls attention to this fact, *Die Kollektivmysterien, Anglia*, xi, p. 234.

<sup>63</sup> Halliwell, pp. 295-297.



and Pylat and Annas and Cayphas here schaffaldys; also than come ther an exposytour, in doctorys wede, thus seyng." But with the buffeting scenes in the Trial before Caiaphas and in Peter's Denial we have the occasional use of simple Latin stage-directions. This is the first appearance of Latin directions since the Lazarus play.

*Trial II (Remorse of Judas, Jesus before Pilate and Herod)*

This play, as it now stands, seems to be a reworking of what was in the cycle originally two plays, with some introduction of new material. If the Remorse of Judas was a separate play, it is probable that it was presented as a sort of interlude between the two trials before Pilate. Strangely enough the Prologue makes no mention of a trial before Herod. Combining this with the fact that the parts of the preceding play concerning Herod were also omitted from the Prologue, it would seem that Herod was introduced into this part of the cycle at the time of revision.

In connection with the first trial before Pilate, the Prologue states that Christ shall be tried together with thieves. But the thieves do not actually appear until the second trial before Pilate. There, however, they are omitted from the Prologue. There are also in this play two other minor points of disagreement between Prologue and plays. The former provides that Pilate's wife shall go to rest, a thing which does not occur in the play; also, the play as it now stands presents no scene where the devil carries Judas off to hell, but simply states that he goes to hang himself.

The meter of the play as a whole is very simple, largely simple quatrains with an occasional double quatrain. A part of the scene where Pilate questions Jesus<sup>64</sup> is written in couplets. The tumbling meter makes its appearance only in the first part of the play where Caiaphas calls the messenger and the messenger delivers his message first to Pilate and then to Caiaphas.

The last stage-direction in the play indicates beyond any doubt that these plays were presented on a fixed stage: "Here enteryth Satan into the place in the most orryble wyse, and qwyl that he pleyth, thei xal don on Jhesus clothis and overest a whyte clothe, and leydyn hym abowth the place and than to Pylat, be the tyme that hese wyff hath pleyd." This play contains one Latin stage-direction.

*Trial III (Pilate's Wife's Dream and the Condemnation)*

Satan's prologue, which is not provided for in the general Prologue, and is also written in the tumbling meter, probably does not belong to the original cycle. The scene of the council in hell is also omitted from the Prologue

<sup>64</sup> Halliwell, p. 301.



and would seem to belong to a later period. It is, however, written in simple quatrains, which is the prevailing meter of the play. With the exception, noted before, that the thieves, placed by the Prologue in the preceding play, actually appear here, the rest of the action is entirely consistent with the Prologue and probably represents an early stage of the cycle.

This play also employs a number of couplets in addition to the prevailing simple quatrains.<sup>65</sup> Here also we have the occasional appearance of simple Latin stage-directions.

### *The Crucifixion*

Jesus' speech to the Jewish women, "Daughters of Jerusalem, etc.," is written in tumbling meter, and probably belongs to a later period than that represented by the Prologue. Although the laments of the women, Simon's carrying of the cross, and the Veronica episode are written in simple quatrains, their omission from the Prologue may indicate that they were later borrowings into the cycle. The Veronica story occurs only in this and the York cycles; it comes from a legendary source, such as would probably not have been used in this cycle at the time of the writing of the Prologue. The forgiving of Dysmas and Pilate's inscription are also omitted from the Prologue, and the latter incident is introduced by just such a stage-direction as we believe is characteristic of the Passion play.

After Pilate has gone back to his scaffold we have the reappearance of the ballad stanza a a b c c b, which is continued to the end of this play and throughout the next.

### *The Harrowing of Hell I*

Although the one stage-direction here is in English, the play is extremely simple and seems to be in its original form. The second scene of the Harrowing of Hell (a part of the Resurrection play) is also written in the ballad meter, and the action follows immediately upon that of the first Harrowing of Hell, as if the two had at one time been a single play. However, that must have been before the Prologue was written, for that provides for a division just as we find it here.

There seem to be no indications of any influence from the Passion play in either of these two scenes. But there may have been some change in the order of the incidents in this part of the cycle. In the Prologue the Longinus story is placed with the first Harrowing of Hell, the two constituting a separate pageant, whereas as the cycle now stands, the first Harrowing of Hell stands alone, and the Longinus episode is placed with the play of the Burial.

<sup>65</sup> Halliwell, pp. 312, 313, 316.

*The Burial and the Setting of the Watch*

Although this play corresponds fairly well, as far as incidents are concerned, with the general Prologue, it presents some little evidence of foreign influence in that both English stage-directions and the tumbling meter are used to some extent. This meter makes its appearance in the conversation of the Centurion and the other two soldiers at the cross. The other scenes of the play are written either in simple quatrains or in the ballad stanza. Nicodemus<sup>66</sup> speaks one stanza in the ballad strophe. The rest of the burial scene and the first part of the Setting of the Watch, are in quatrains; but beginning with Affraunt's speech to Pilate on the way to the tomb, the ballad measure is again employed. In the first part of this last scene the lines are generally four feet long, but the last stanza of Pilate's speech and the conversation of the soldiers at the grave are in the very short line ballad stanza, often running into the form a a b c c b.

This play marks the end of the influence of the Passion play. The following plays, though not always corresponding in every detail with the Prologue, are, with the exception of the play of the Assumption of the Virgin, very simple. There is only one further instance (in the play of Thomas) of the use of the tumbling meter; and only one stage-direction in English (in the play of Mary Magdalene) throughout the rest of the cycle. The stage-directions are again simple, as they were in the first part of the cycle, and there is no further mention of "the place." The play of Mary Magdalene ends with an "Explicit apparicio Mariae Magdalen," and each succeeding play, except the Assumption of the Virgin, begins with a direction somewhat in the nature of an "Incipit." The play of Pentecost also ends with an "Amen."

*Resurrection and Awakening of the Watch*

At the end of the Crucifixion a stage-direction, in agreement with the Prologue, states that Mary, the mother of Jesus, goes to the Temple. But in the play of the Burial she is present and at the end is said to be left with the other Marys at the tomb. The Prologue for the Burial makes no provision for this, but states in the section devoted to the play of the Resurrection, that Christ goes to the Temple to find his mother; whereas in the play of the Resurrection Christ seems to find his mother at the tomb. Thus the action in the Prologue is consistent with itself and with the direction at the end of the play of the Crucifixion, whereas the action that follows this direction in the plays is not consistent. It is probable that in the cycle, at the time which the Prologue represents, Mary went to the Temple after the crucifixion and remained there to meet Christ after his resurrection; whereas in

<sup>66</sup> Halliwell, p. 331.

some other play, which has influenced this cycle, the Marys were left at the tomb after the burial and remained there to be ready for the play of Christ's Appearance to the Three Marys. In this latter play, the play of the Three Marys probably stood for the Resurrection and there probably was no special appearance to the Virgin Mary. In this connection it is interesting to note that Virgin Mary is not one of the three women who go to the tomb, according to the direction at the beginning of the play of the Three Marys. "Hic venient ad sepulchrum Maria Magdalene, Maria Jacobi, et Maria Salome, etc." The direction first quoted is also inconsistent with that at the end of the Burial referred to above: "Here the princes xal do reverens to oure Lady, and gon here way, and leve the Maryes at the sepulchre." If our theory is correct, the direction stating that the three Marys go to the grave belongs to the second play which we believe has influenced the cycle.

Another inconsistency between Prologue and cycle appears in that the former does not specifically mention the awakening of the watch, although it does seem to imply some such scene in the section devoted to the preceding play, when in providing for the setting of the watch, it suggests that at the resurrection Christ shall frighten the soldiers. Possibly in the old cycle this scene occurred in the same pageant with the setting of the watch.

#### *The Remaining Plays of the Cycle*

The play of the Journey to Emmaus is a very simple biblical play and agrees with the Prologue with the exception that the Prologue treats the story of Thomas as a separate pageant. The use of the tumbling meter in this second part of the play would seem to be very significant in the light of this inconsistency. It looks as if at the time of the revising of the cycle the original Thomas play had been rewritten in this late meter and appended to the regular Peregrini play.

In the Ascension play one angel only appears; whereas the Prologue states that there shall be two. At the end of the play Peter (whose name is omitted from the manuscript and also from Halliwell's edition) makes a speech to the disciples telling them to elect another apostle, which is not included in the Prologue but is consistent with the Bible story.<sup>67</sup>

The play of Pentecost is remarkably short consisting of only thirty-nine lines. It would almost seem that it, like the Judgment play, must be a fragment, though there is no indication of this in the manuscript, as in the case of the latter play. In the Judgment play we have at the end the name "Deus" indicated as the next speaker, but no speech is provided for him.

The Assumption of the Virgin is not provided for in the Prologue and is written in a different hand from that of the rest of the cycle. It is different

<sup>67</sup> Falke, *Die Quellen des sog. Ludus Coventriae*, also calls attention to the omission of Peter's name.

in tone and much more elaborate than any of the other plays. Directions such as the following: "Hic cantabunt org,"<sup>68</sup> and "Et hic ascendent in coelum cantantibus organis,"<sup>69</sup> may be thought to indicate that this play was at some time performed in a church.

Metrically this play is very much confused. There are a number of passages in the prologue stanza, also a number of quatrains. Some of these quatrains are double, thus, a b a b a b a b, and a number of them also begin with a couplet, a a b a b a b a b. Five stanzas scattered through the play seem to show a confusion of quatrains with the ballad stanza, a a a b a b-a b a b.<sup>70</sup> The play shows throughout, however, longer lines than the rest of the cycle.

With the exception of this play and the Thomas scene, noted before, this last part of the cycle is very simple metrically, presenting three main forms of meter, the ballad stanza, the double quatrain, and the prologue stanza. The Resurrection and the Three Marys down to Magdalene's speech to the apostles are in the ballad stanza. Beginning with this speech and throughout the next two plays as far as the scene of the Incredulity of Thomas the simple double quatrain form is employed, with an occasional single quatrain in the Appearance to Mary Magdalene. The Thomas scene is in tumbling quatrains. The remaining three plays are in the prologue stanza. In the Ascension and Pentecost the form of the stanza has been slightly changed from a b a b a b a b c d d d c to a b a b b c b c d e e e d, but the Judgment play resumes the old form.

## CONCLUSION

It appears, then, from our study that the Prologue provides for the following incidents:

1. Creation of Angels and Fall of Lucifer
2. Creation and Fall of Man
3. Cain and Abel
4. Noah and the Flood
5. Abraham and Isaac
6. Moses and the Laws
7. Prophets (prophecies of a queen)
8. Mary's Betrothal (in two parts)
9. Salutation
10. Joseph's Trouble about Mary
11. The Trial of Joseph and Mary

(This section is a simple quatrain and probably not a part of the original prologue.)

<sup>68</sup> Halliwell, p. 393.

<sup>69</sup> Halliwell, p. 400.

<sup>70</sup> Halliwell, pp. 387, 391, 392.



12. Joseph and the Midwives  
(Also a quatrain.)
13. The Adoration of the Shepherds
14. The Adoration of the Magi
15. Slaughter of the Innocents (including a Flight into Egypt)
16. The Death of Herod
17. Christ and the Doctors
18. The Baptism of Christ
19. The Temptation (including a Council in Hell)
20. The Woman Taken in Adultery
21. The Resurrection of Lazarus
22. The Entry into Jerusalem
23. The Last Supper (including Judas' Selling of Christ)
24. The Betrayal
25. Christ before Caiaphas (including Peter's Denial)
26. Christ before Pilate
27. The Remorse of Judas
28. Pilate's Wife's Dream and the Second Trial before Pilate
29. The Crucifixion
30. Longinus and the First Harrowing of Hell
31. Burial and Setting of the Watch
32. Second Harrowing of Hell and Christ's Salutation to His Mother (i. e.,  
The Resurrection)
33. The Three Marys (*Quem Quaeritis*)
34. Mary Magdalene (*Hortulanus*)
35. Cleophas and Luke (*Peregrini*)
36. Thomas of India
37. The Ascension
38. Pentecost
39. Doomsday

Mr. E. N. S. Thompson in an article on *Ludus Coventriae*<sup>71</sup> expresses the opinion that this Prologue is not an integral part of the cycle, but is antedated by the plays. This view, however, I can not agree with. The agreement of the Prologue and the cycle in all essential scenes, and in such peculiarities as (1) the emphasis on the Virgin in the Prophecies, (2) the prefixing of a council in hell to the regular Temptation play, (3) the division of the Harrowing of Hell into two scenes, (4) the fact that Christ appears to his mother in the Resurrection before he is seen by the three Marys, and many other instances make it impossible to doubt that the Prologue belongs

<sup>71</sup> *Mod. Lang. Notes*, xxi.



to the cycle. Moreover, it will be noted that the plays here provided for, while sufficient for a complete cycle,<sup>72</sup> provide only for very simple biblical scenes. As the Prologue now stands there are only three scenes that come from Apochryphal sources, namely, Mary's Betrothal, the Trial of Joseph and Mary, and Joseph and the Midwives, and two of these seem from metrical evidences to be later additions. So that it does not seem probable that the Prologue is antedated by the plays, but rather that it represents an earlier and more primitive form of the same cycle. Thus the theory that the Prologue represents an early stage of our plays and that those scenes which do not appear there are later modifications of the cycle, appears to be tenable.

Chief among these modifications are the Virgin play in the Nativity group of plays, and the Passion play in the third group. In addition to these two main instances, it will be remembered that other scenes not mentioned in the Prologue, such as the Lamech episode in the play of Noah's Flood, the story of the Cherry-tree in the Journey to Bethlehem, and the Veronica episode in the Crucifixion are to be regarded as belonging to the period of revision.

To support this conclusion an examination of the metrical arrangement of the cycle has revealed the fact that the tumbling measure, which we believe to have been the meter of a redactor, is used to the greatest extent in the Virgin and Passion plays, and that it appears elsewhere only in such parts of the cycle as bear evidence of revision; namely, the Lamech episode, the Cherry-tree episode, Herod's first boastful speech in the play of the Magi, and Christ's appearance to Thomas.

The following table represents the general distribution of the various verse-forms throughout the cycle. It omits, however, the form *a a b a a b b c b c* which appears only in the last half of Joseph's Trouble about Mary and in the play of the Purification.

<sup>72</sup> The omission of the Visit to Elizabeth, which may seem to be traditionally necessary, has been accounted for by the fact that the Prologue here bears evidence of having been modified.

TUMBLING METER	PROLOGUE METER	QUATRAINS (SINGLE AND DOUBLE)	BALLAD VERSE	COUPLETS
Noah's Ark (from the point where the angel delivers God's command to the end, including the Lamech episode)	Prologue Fall of Lucifer Fall of Man Cain and Abel Noah's Ark (to the point where the Angel delivers God's command)	Prologue (two instances only)	Fall of Man (only in scene where God visits the garden)	
Mary's Betrothal (one or two instances)	Mary's Betrothal (main part of play)	Abraham and Isaac Moses and the Law Prophets		
Salutation (Contemplatio's speech)	Mary's Betrothal (main part of play)	Mary's Betrothal (occasional appearance) Salutation (main part of play)		
Visit to Elizabeth (main part of play)	Joseph's Trouble about Mary (first part)	Visit to Elizabeth (only in scene where Joseph and Mary bid Elizabeth farewell)		
Joseph and the Midwives (the Cherry-tree episode only)	Shepherds (two stanzas only)	Trial of Joseph and Mary (main part of play) Joseph and the Midwives (main part of play)	Trial of Joseph and Mary (only in Den's introductory speech)	
The Three Kings (only in Herod's first speech)	The Three Kings (in some of Herod's later speeches)	Shepherds (only in scene where they imitate the angels)	Shepherds (main part of play) The Three Kings (main part of play)	

TUMBLING METER	PROLOGUE METER	QUATRAINS (SINGLE AND DOUBLE)	BALLAD VERSE	COUPLETS
	Slaughter of Innocents, (Herod's first speech and the banquet scene and the death of Herod)		Slaughter of Innocents (main part of play)	
	Baptism Temptation			
Council of the Jews (main part of council scene)		Christ and the Doctors The Woman Taken in Adultery Lazarus Council of Jews (only occasional appearance) The Entry (main part of this scene) Last Supper (main part of play)		
Last Supper (two scenes only: 1. One shall betray me, etc. 2. The establishment of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper)				
Betrayal (only the laments of the women)		Betrayal (main part of play)		
Trial I (main part of Doctors' prologue Contemplacio's speech Herod and the Soldiers Scenes involving the Messenger and parts of the trial Peter's lament)		Trial I Actual trial before Caiaphas Peter's third denial		Trial I Peter's first two denials
Trial II. The scenes in first part of play involving the messenger		Trial II (main part of play)		Trial II Short scene in examination of Jesus by Pilate
Trial III. Satan's prologue		Trial III (main part of play)		Trial III Three short scenes

TUMBLING METER	PROLOGUE METER	QUATRAINS (SINGLE AND DOUBLE)	BALLAD VERSE	COUPLETS
Crucifixion (only in Jesus' speech to the women)		Crucifixion (first part)	Crucifixion (second part)	Crucifixion (a very few lines)
Burial (only in scene between centurion and the soldiers at the cross)		Burial (main part of scene)	Harrowing of Hell	
			Setting of the Watch (entire scene)	
			Resurrection and Awakening of Watch	
		The Three Marys (from Magdalene's speech to the disciples to the end)	The Three Marys (to Magdalene's speech to the apostles)	
		The Appearance to Mary Magdalene		
		The Peregrini (entire scene)		
Christ's appearance to Thomas (entire scene)	Ascension of Christ Pentecost Assumption of Virgin (parts only) Judgment			

It appears, then, that the prologue stanza is used to the exclusion of other forms in the beginning and end of the cycle, and also appears to some extent in the plays dealing with the Nativity. The plays of the Baptism and Temptation are written entirely in this form, but after that the stanza does not occur again until the Ascension. The quatrain measure is predominating in the main body of the cycle. The double quatrain stanza begins in the play of Abraham and Isaac and is used pretty generally through the Nativity group and the plays concerning the life of Christ from the Dispute with the Doctors through the first half of the Passion. Beginning with the second half of the Passion play the single quatrains seem to be preferred to the double.

In the Old Testament plays there is only a single instance of the ballad measure, God's visit to the Garden of Eden in the play of the Fall of Man. It is not used to any extent until after the Virgin play in the Trial of Joseph and Mary and a few of the plays immediately following that. Then it does not occur again before the last part of the Crucifixion and is used generally in the plays dealing with the Resurrection. There is no extensive use of couplets; but when they do appear, it is in scenes that it would seem must have been parts of the original cycle.

A study of the stage-directions also substantiates the theory that the Prologue represents an early stage in the development of the cycle; since those parts which correspond most closely with the Prologue employ simple Latin stage-directions; whereas the later and more complicated portions of the cycle use English stage-directions as follows:

Entirely Latin	{	Fall of Lucifer Fall of Man Cain and Abel Noah's Flood Abraham and Isaac Moses and the Tables Prophets
English and Latin	{	The Barrenness of Anna Mary's Presentation in the Temple
Latin	{	Mary's Betrothal
English and Latin	{	Salutation and Conception
None	{	Joseph's Trouble about Mary
English and Latin	{	The Visit to Elizabeth



Entirely Latin	{	The Trial of Joseph and Mary Joseph and the Midwives The Adoration of the Shepherds The Adoration of the Magi
English and Latin	{	The Purification
Entirely Latin	{	The Slaughter of the Innocents, etc. Christ and the Doctors The Baptism of Christ The Temptation The Woman Taken in Adultery The Resurrection of Lazarus
Entirely English	{	Council of the Jews and Entry The Last Supper The Betrayal Herod and Christ before Caiaphas
Prevailing English (with the excep- tions noted)	{	Actual Trial before Caiaphas   Et clamabunt omnes   Et percuciet super caput   Et cantabit gallus Trial before Pilate and Herod   Et clamabunt Pilate's Wife's Dream and   Hic unus afferet aquam Second Trial before Pilate   Et clamabunt   Et curret   Et clamabunt omnes Crucifixion   Hic quasi semimortua, etc.   Tunc transiet Maria ad Templum Harrowing of Hell Burial and Setting   Tunc ibunt ad sepulcrum Pilate, etc. of the Watch
Entirely Latin (with the one exception noted)	{	Second Harrowing of Hell and Resurrection The Three Maries Mary Magdalene Maria Magdalen goth to the grave and wepyth and seyth Peregrini and Thomas Ascension Pentecost Assumption of the Virgin Doomsday

The question of the method of presentation of these plays is still an unsolved problem. Mr. Davidson<sup>73</sup> is of the opinion that the Hegge plays, as he calls them, were not presented in separate pageants, but that the entire cycle was intended for presentation in three successive days or years. He

<sup>73</sup> *Studies in English Mystery Plays*, pp. 172-174.

also suggests that the same tree was used in the Cherry-tree episode and in the play of the Three Kings.<sup>74</sup> Mr. Thompson<sup>75</sup> divides the cycle, for purposes of presentation, into five groups, each of which, he believes, was acted on a separate vehicle. These five groups are as follows:

1. The Old Testament group, comprising the first seven plays.
2. The Barrenness of Anna to the Visit to Elizabeth.
3. The Trial of Joseph and Mary to the Dispute of Christ and the Doctors.
4. The Baptism to the Betrayal.
5. The rest of the cycle, which he believes was acted during the second year, as stated by Contemplacio in his prologue to the Herod play.

We have seen reasons in the appearance of the manuscript and in the fact that the play of Abraham and Isaac ends with an "Explicit" to believe that the first five plays, rather than the first seven, were regarded as a single unit. The sixth and seventh plays of Moses and the Prophets we have considered as belonging to the Nativity and not to the Old Testament group.

Mr. Thompson's second group is identical with what we have termed the Virgin play. For the performance of this play the following properties and stations were necessary: A temple with an altar and something to represent the fifteen steps that Mary ascended; a space outside of the temple, for one of the directions specifies "*recedant tribus extra templum*"; stations to represent the homes of Anna and Joachim, of Mary and Joseph, and of Elizabeth and Zacharias. Moreover, some device must have been contrived in order to represent heaven; for we have, in addition to the dispute of the Four Daughters of God, the Council of the Trinity, and others which take place in heaven, repeated directions that angels shall descend from heaven and again ascend. We also have a choir in heaven. In the play of the Visit to Elizabeth we are told that Joseph and Mary walk "*circa placeam*" on their way to the house of Elizabeth. All this elaborate machinery could not have been carried about on a vehicle; but, as has been suggested before, the whole play must have been presented on a fixed stage.

In the discussion of the plays concerned with the Passion and Resurrection, it was pointed out that there was a similar group of plays where the use of a stationary stage was even more clearly indicated than in the case of the Virgin play. This group began with the Council of the Jews and ended with the Burial and Setting of the Watch, thus comprising parts of Mr. Thompson's fourth and fifth groups. The plays which follow this group are much more simple in action and stage-directions, many of them being announced by "Incipits" and ended by "Explicit," so that it is not necessary to believe that they were acted on the same stage as the Passion play.

<sup>74</sup> Halliwell, pp. 145, 146, and 164.

<sup>75</sup> *Mod. Lang. Notes*, xxi.

This Passion play may have been presented in two divisions or scenes, as indicated by *Contemplacio*; but the properties in the two parts are sufficiently alike to indicate that the same stage was used in the two parts. In the first part we have scaffolds for Annas and Caiaphas which they occupy when the play opens, and continue to retain until they take part in the action, when they descend into "the place." The first scene of the council is said to take place in the "myd-place," that is somewhere between Annas' and Caiaphas' stations. Then we are told that in the scene of the Entry, Christ rides out of "the place." This place must have been large and divided into two parts during such plays as the Last Supper, where the scene shifts from the Supper to the Council and we are told that one place or the other shall suddenly uncloze. After Judas has made his arrangements with the Jews, the Council breaks up and the priests go again to their scaffolds. After this Christ walks from the part of "the place" where he has been keeping the Last Supper to Gethsemane. The part of "the place" that was previously used for the Council may here have been used for the garden. After the usual scene in the garden a direction states that Jesus goes into "the place" where the soldiers are who have come to capture him. This is probably the part that was previously used for the Last Supper. Then Jesus is led out of "the place" to Annas and Caiaphas.

The second part of the play begins with a procession after which Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate take their scaffolds. It seems that Herod's station was surrounded by a curtain, for after Jesus has appeared before Pilate the first time, we are told that "Herowdys scaffold xal uncloze shewing Herowdes in astat, alle the Jewys knelyng, etc." In this part of the play there must have been a spot to represent Hell. Before Lucifer goes to Pilate's wife he speaks to the devils in hell. A station for Pilate's wife was also needed. The scene of the second trial before Pilate calls for a court room which was not the same as Pilate's scaffold, for we are told that he returns to his station after he has pronounced sentence. The action here takes place both within and without the court room. After this point Pilate and the high priests presumably remain on their scaffolds until they come down to put the inscription on the cross of Christ. Then they again return to their stations where Pilate receives Joseph's request for the body of Christ and the high priests' request for a watch. When the watch go to the tomb, Pilate, Annas, and Caiaphas accompany them, but return again to their scaffolds, where if the Passion play extends so far, they will receive the report of the watch. The scenes of the crucifixion and the burial naturally demand a station for the three crosses and one for the tomb; certainly also the Temple to which Mary, the mother of Christ, retires.

Granted, then, that the plays of the Life of the Virgin and the Passion were acted on fixed stages, the question still remains as to how the other

plays were presented. It is possible that the Old Testament plays (i. e., the first five of the cycle) were acted on one movable pageant, although the introduction of a movable ark in the Noah play renders this unlikely. The use of the word "pageant" in the Prologue together with the frequent "Incipits" and "Explicits" that often mark off individual plays, would seem to me to indicate that our original cycle, represented by the Prologue, was acted on a series of pageants; and that when the later modification took place some of the "Incipits" and "Explicits" were retained, whereas the greater part of them were omitted.

If we grant that the play of the Assumption of the Virgin was acted in a church, it may be possible that parts of the cycle, as it now stands, were acted on a fixed stage, and other parts, on movable pageants. It is possible that the plays which precede the Virgin play were acted on movable vehicles, and then that the procession stopped and presented on a fixed stage the plays dealing with the life of the Virgin. After this the procession resumed its way through the streets, presenting the plays which intervene between the Virgin and the Passion plays. The scenes presenting the Passion were again played on another fixed stage, after which the players proceeded to the church where the Assumption, and possibly the Judgment, were given.

Two circumstances, however, point to another interpretation, which I believe to be more plausible. In the play of Noah's Flood, after the Lamech episode, we are told that Noah enters with his ship.<sup>76</sup> Again in the play of the Trial of Joseph and Mary this direction occurs, "Hic intrabit pagentum de purgatione Mariae et Joseph" (p. 132). These stage-directions seem to me to indicate that the audience was stationary and that such movable pageants, as were used in the performance, were rolled in before the audience. In any case, *Ludus Coventriae* bears evidence of a change from the traditional Corpus Christi cycle acted on moveable pageants to a more elaborate play on a fixed stage.

<sup>76</sup> Halliwell, p. 46.



## NOTE ON THE HOME OF LUDUS COVENTRIAE

It has never been known where the cycle of mystery plays published by the Shakespeare Society in 1841 as "Ludus Coventriae: a Collection of Mysteries formerly represented at Coventry on the Feast of Corpus Christi," were acted, although it has long been known that they are not the Coventry plays. The editor of the cycle, J. O. Halliwell(-Phillips), follows a tradition to the effect that this cycle was formerly acted by the Grey Friars of Coventry. The first connection of the manuscript with Coventry is an entry on folio 1\*r, said by Halliwell to be in the handwriting of Dr. Richard James, librarian to Sir Robert Cotton to the following effect: "Contenta Novi Testamenti scenice expressa et actitata olim per monachos sive fratres mendicantes; vulgo dicitur hic liber Ludus Coventriae, sive Ludus Corporis Christi; scribitur metris Anglicanis." The manuscript had formerly belonged to Robert Hegge of Durham, a fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford; he has written his name on it in several places. At his death in 1630 the manuscript passed into the hands of Sir Robert Cotton. Halliwell states on the basis of a letter in the Cottonian collection<sup>1</sup> that James was about that time engaged at Oxford in collecting manuscripts for Sir Robert Cotton. The only other descriptive entry on the manuscript is at the top of folio 1r: "The plaie called Corpus Christi." This is in a seventeenth-century hand, I should think, but not the hand of Robert Hegge, as stated by Mr. S. B. Hemingway,<sup>2</sup> or that of James in the preceding entry. Sharp attributes the former entry to Dr. Smith, a later Cottonian librarian, who enters it in a catalogue of the Cottonian MSS. in 1696, as "A collection of plays, in old English meter: *h. e.* Dramata sacra, in quibus exhibentur historiae veteris et N. Testamenti, introductis quasi in scenam personis illic memoratis, quas secum invicem colloquentes pro ingenio finget Poeta. Videntur olim coram populo, sive ad instruendum sive ad placendum, a Fratribus mendicantibus representata." It should be noted with regard to the former entry that James does not say that the cycle is "Ludus Coventriae," but merely that "vulgo dicitur Ludus Coventriae." It is obvious that James had not read the plays, since he speaks of "Contenta novi testamenti," whereas there are Old as well as New Testament subjects treated. It may or may not be significant that Dr. Smith says nothing about Coventry.

The connection of this cycle with Coventry was perpetuated by the following passage from Dugdale's *History of Warwickshire*, edition of 1656, page 116:<sup>3</sup> "Before the suppression of the monasteries, this city [Coventry]

<sup>1</sup> The reference, as given by Halliwell, p. vii, is Cotton. Julius, C. iii, fol. 193.

<sup>2</sup> *English Nativity Plays*, p. xxix.

<sup>3</sup> Halliwell, pp. ix-x; Sharp, *Dissertation*, p. 5 ff.



was very famous for the pageants that were played therein, upon Corpus-Christi day; which occasioning very great confluence of people thither from far and near, was of no small benefit thereto; which pageants being acted with mighty state and reverence by the friars of this house [the Gray Friars of Coventry], had theaters for the several scenes, very large and high, placed upon wheels, and drawn to all the eminent parts of the city, for the better advantage of spectators: and contained the story of the New-Testament, composed into old English Rithme, as appeareth by an ancient MS. (in bibl. Cotton. sub effigie Vesp. D. 9 [8]) intituled *Ludus Corporis Christi*, or *Ludus Coventriae*.<sup>4</sup> I have been told by some old people, who in their younger years were eye-witnesses of these pageants so acted, that the yearly confluence of people to see that shew was extraordinary great, and yielded no small advantage to this city."

Thomas Sharp, writing in 1825, perceived that *Ludus Coventriae* "were no part of the Plays or Pageants exhibited by the Trading Companies of the City," but he did not reject Dugdale's tradition as to plays by the Grey Friars, and this he thought might be the cycle they had acted. In this opinion he is followed by Halliwell. Sharp cites an entry in the Coventry Annals, "solitary mention in one MS. (not older than the *beginning* of Chas. I.'s reign) of Henry VIIth's visit to the City in 1492, 'to see Plays acted by the Grey Friars.'" In this I think we may find the source of Dugdale's error. Dugdale was born in 1605, and the Coventry Corpus Christi plays were discontinued in 1580. He pretends to give only a somewhat general tradition as to the plays and the crowds that they attracted. This vague tradition is rendered definite for him by two things; the first is the note on the MS. by James. James died in 1638, and Dugdale, according to Sharp, page 6, was introduced to Sir Thomas Cotton and the Cottonian MSS. that year. Sir William Dugdale was working on his *History of Warwickshire* as early as 1642, and, according to the Dictionary of National Biography, was using Sir Thomas Cotton's library in 1652, and no doubt used it a great deal during the years he was at work on the book. The second document that misled him was the MSS. Annals. There are at least four of these books of annals still to be found in manuscript.<sup>5</sup> Two, A. 26 and A. 43, are among the Corporation manuscripts at Coventry; neither is of very great age, and both contain pretty much the same materials: lists of mayors, notable or miraculous events, and a number of mentions of plays. There are also two at the British Museum, Harl. 6388 and 11346 Plut. CXLII. A.; the latter is of no great value as regards pageants. Harl. 6388 was written by Humphrey Wanley, and is dated Dec. 17, 1690. Wanley says: "This book was taken out of

<sup>4</sup> In his MS., according to Halliwell, Dugdale says: "In that incomparable library belonging to Sir Thomas Cotton, there is yet one of the bookes which perteyned to this pageant, entitled *Ludus Corporis Christi*, or *Ludus Coventriae*."

<sup>5</sup> On this subject, see a fuller account in my edition of *Two Coventry Corpus Christi Plays*, E. E. T. S., p. xix ff.

manuscripts, the one written by Mr. Cristofer Owen Mayor of this citty which contains the charter of Walter de Coventre concerning the commons *etc.* to Godfrey Leg Mayor 1637, the other beginning at the 36 mayor of this citty and continued by several hands and lately by Edmund Palmer late of this citty . . . and another written by Mr. Bedford and collected out of divers others and continued to Mr. Septimius Bott. And two other collected by Tho. Potter and continued to Mr. Robert Blake, and another written by Mr. Francis Barnett, to the first year of Mr. Jelliffs Majoralty, and another written by Mr. Abraham Astley, and continued to Mr. Sept. Bott, and another written by Mr. Abraham Boune to Humfrey Wrightwick, 1607." In Dugdale's *Warwickshire* there is also a list of mayors of Coventry with annals. Sharp quotes *MS. Annals* and *Codex Hales*, and there was at least one copy of Coventry annals in the Birmingham Free Reference Library at the time of the fire in 1879, so that Sharp may represent an original.

The entry with which we have to do is given as follows: "Corp. MSS. A. 26 and A. 43: Thomas Churchman, bucklemaker, Mayor, 1492. This year the King and Queen came to Kenilworth; from thence they came to Coventry to see our plays at Corpus Christide and gave them great commendation. Dugdale and 11346 Plut. CXLII. A: In his Mayoralty K. H. 7. came to see the playes acted by the Grey Friars and much commended them. Harl. 6388: The King and Queen came to see the playes at the greyfriars and much commended them." The entry as given in Dugdale gave rise to the impression in his mind, I think, as it certainly did in the mind of Thomas Sharp, that there were plays in Coventry acted by the brotherhood of the Grey Friars. James's note had suggested monks or mendicant friars; here was this entry in the Coventry annals which he prints. It is easy to see that we have to do with a misunderstanding. "Acted by the Grey Friars" need not mean that grey friars were the actors; but may mean "at the Gray-friars church." The grey-friars was a common way of indicating the church. Wanley so understands the entry, for he says in Harl. 6388, "to see the playes at the greyfriars." He worked from a large number of manuscripts, and there is no doubt but that the entry means simply that the King and Queen watched the Corpus Christi play as it was presented by the craft guilds in front of the Grey Friars church, where there would certainly have been a station; just as Queen Margaret had seen them at a station in Earl Street in 1456.

The only mention of a place of performance in the cycle itself is at the end of the general Prologue:

A Sunday next, yf that we may,  
At vj. of the belle we ginne oure play,  
In N. towne, wherfore we pray,  
That God now be Youre Spede.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Halliwell, p. 18.

This was understood by somebody, Sharp does not say whom,<sup>7</sup> to indicate a series of plays for exhibition at Corpus Christi festival generally, rather than expressly for Coventry, since N. (nomen) is the usual mode of distinguishing a person or place under such circumstances, "as N. stands in the marriage ceremony unto this day."<sup>8</sup> Halliwell says, "If the opinion I have formed of their locality be correct, I can account for this by supposing that the prologues of the vexillators belong to another series of plays, or that these mysteries were occasionally performed at other places. . . . it must be confessed that the conclusion would suit a company of strolling players much better than the venerable order of the Grey Friars."<sup>9</sup> The idea that *Ludus Coventriae* is the play-book of a strolling company has been very generally entertained since that time. Ten Brink follows that idea and assigns their dialect to the North-East Midlands; so also Pollard.<sup>10</sup> Ten Brink's conclusion as to dialect is in part confirmed by a study of the dialect by M. Kramer, *Sprache und Heimat des sogen. Ludus Coventriae*, who, however, thinks that the plays are of southern origin but rewritten in the North-East Midlands. Chambers does not consider the strolling company hypothesis as proved. He perceives that they are stationary plays in their present form, but does not take the trouble to ascertain that the manuscript is divided into separate plays, although the numbers are large and in red. Another mistake he makes is that, although he sees that the Prologue must have been written for the plays, he thinks that it is later in date than they are. It represents, as Miss Swenson's dissertation clearly shows, an earlier, purely cyclic stage of the same plays. Still Chambers does not rule out the idea that we have to do in the Hegge cycle with a series of craft-plays. He suggests Norwich and says that the elaborate treatment of the legends of the Virgin suggests a performance, like that of the Lincoln plays, and of the Massacre of the Innocents in the Digby MS., on St. Anne's day (July 26).

I wish to make the last suggestion much more definitely, having arrived at considerable certainty with regard to it from other points of view. There are, I think, good reasons for fixing upon Lincoln as the home of these plays. The somewhat scanty records of the Lincoln plays seem to point to a Corpus Christi play which was transferred to St. Anne's day, and acted regularly as a St. Anne's play until near the middle of the sixteenth century. It was apparently an ordinary cyclic play with certain features appropriate to St. Anne's day. The so-called Coventry cycle, or to use the name of a former owner of the manuscript, the Hegge cycle, is unique in the possession of a group of plays dealing with the nativity and childhood of the Virgin Mary, a

<sup>7</sup> Sharp, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> See also J. P. Collier, *History of Dramatic Poetry*, ii, p. 156.

<sup>9</sup> *Loc. cit.*, p. xi.

<sup>10</sup> Ten Brink, *English Literature*, ii, p. 283; A. W. Pollard, *English Miracle Plays*, p. xxxvii. A. R. Hohlfeld, *Die Kollektivmysterien, Anglia*, xi, p. 228, suggests that the Grey Friars went on the road with their play.



subject of unmistakable connection with St. Anne's day. The Corporation records show that each Lincoln alderman was required to furnish a silk gown for one of the "kings" in the procession of St. Anne. This has been supposed to refer to the Three Kings of Cologne in the Magi play; but there were only three of the magi, and there must have been more than three aldermen. The Hegge prophet play calls for no less than thirteen kings, and is, moreover, unique among prophet plays. The prophets foretell the birth of Mary and not of Jesus. The play might be described as a dramatic form of the mediaeval theme of the "Root of Jesse." They had, as we shall see presently, some special kind of prophet play known particularly as *visus*, or "sights," though the name was applied to the whole St. Anne's play too, and this Jesse, it is so called in the manuscript, with the accompanying Virgin plays would be most appropriate.

The available information about the Lincoln plays is contained in the 14th Report of the Historical Manuscripts Commission,<sup>11</sup> and in an article entitled *Some English Plays and Players* by Mr. A. F. Leach in the Furnivall Miscellany. Canon Wordsworth has also published a few bits of information in his *Lincoln Statutes* and his *Notes on Mediaeval Services in England*. One can not be sure whether or not the principal manuscripts have been read carefully for the purpose of getting all possible information about the plays, or whether a study of completer forms of the references already found might not yield a good deal more information than they do in their imperfect versions. The Chapter Act Books and the Chapter Computi seem particularly promising. The Historical MSS. Report on the Manuscripts of the Dean and the Chapter of Lincoln<sup>12</sup> gives no information, and that which we have comes from Mr. Leach's article.

We know of unusual dramatic activities on the part of vicars of the choir and clerks of the Cathedral in the thirteenth century from the hostile writings of Bishop Grosseteste.<sup>13</sup> He denounces *ludos* and *miracula* together with the Feast of Fools. In 1390 the vicars and clerks are still liable to censure because they dressed like laymen, laughed, shouted, and acted plays, which they commonly and fitly called the Feast of Fools.<sup>14</sup> There was apparently much dramatic activity in the minster. Chapter Computi for 1406, 1452, 1531, have entries of payments, "In serothecis emptis pro Maria et Angelo et Prophetis ex consuetudine in Aurora Natalis Dñi hoc anno."<sup>15</sup> There is one very puzzling entry given by Canon Wordsworth<sup>16</sup> in these terms: "In 1420 tithes to the amount of 8s 8d were assigned to Thomas

<sup>11</sup> Appendix, 8, pp. 1-120.

<sup>12</sup> *Hist. MSS.*, xii. App. 9, pp. 553 ff.

<sup>13</sup> Chambers, ii. p. 100 *et passim*; Luard, *Letters of Robert Grosseteste*, (Rolls Series), 74, 162, 317.

<sup>14</sup> Chapter Act Book quoted by Leach, p. 222.

<sup>15</sup> These entries are given by Wordsworth, *Notes on Mediaeval Services*, p. 126, and *Lincoln Statutes*, ii, iv.

<sup>16</sup> Wordsworth, p. 126.

Chamberleyn for getting up a spectacle or pageant ('cujusdam excellentis visus') called *Rubum quem viderat* at Christmas." This is possibly to be connected with the prophet play mentioned above, since Moses was in most versions of the *processus* the first prophet—hence the allusion to the burning bush—and with him possibly the play of the Tables of the Law.

Further references point to an identification of the Corpus Christi play with the play acted on St. Anne's day. Leach gives entries from a list of mayors and bailiffs of the reign of Henry VIII with annals of the city. Amongst the entries are references to plays, two being to the Corpus Christi play, namely, in 12 of Edw. IV, 1471-2, and 14 of Edw. IV, 1473-4. One of the Chapter Act books, according to Leach, has a reference in 1469 to the Show or Play of St. Anne. And if we trace this St. Anne's play by means of the Corporation Minute Book covering the early fifteenth century,<sup>17</sup> we find that it was probably the Corpus Christi play under a new name. There were no doubt extensive changes in the play to make it more appropriate to St. Anne's day; but it is evidently, to all intents and purposes, a Corpus Christi play transferred to another date, a thing familiar in the Chester and Norwich Whitsun plays. The following entries will indicate the circumstances of the St. Anne's play so far as they can be determined from the materials at hand:

1515, 27 July. It is agreed that whereas divers garments and other "heriorments" are yearly borrowed in the country for the arraying of the pageants of St. Anne's guild, but now the knights and gentlemen are afraid with the plague so that the "graceman" (chief officer of the Guild of St. Anne) cannot borrow such garments, every alderman shall prepare and set forth in the said array two good gowns, and every sheriff and every chamberlain a gown, and the persons with them shall wear the same. And the constables are ordered to wait upon the array in procession, both to keep the people from the array, and also to take heed of such as wear garments in the same.

1517, 10 June, 22 Sept. Sir Robert Denyas appointed St. Anne's priest . . . having yearly 5*l.*, he promising yearly to help to the bringing forth and preparing of the pageants in St. Anne's guild.

1518, 16 June. Ordered that every alderman shall send forth a servant with a torch to be lighted in the procession with a rochet (1521, "an onest gowne") upon him about the Sacrament, under pain of forfeiture of 6*s.* 8*d.*, and also under like penalty, send forth one person with a good gown upon his back to go in the procession. That every constable shall wait on the procession on St. Anne's day by 7 of the clock. . . . In 1525 the aldermen are each to provide a gown of silk for the kings. . . . It is ordered that every occupation shall prepare and apparel in all preparation except plate and cups ("copes"). List of defaulters in 1526. In 1527 the parishioners of St. John Evang. in Wykford refuse to lend "honroments."

1519, 18 June. Agreed that every man and woman in the city, being able, shall be brother and sister in St. Anne's guild, and pay yearly 4*d.*, man and wife, at the least.

Every occupation belonging to St. Anne's guild to bring forth their pageants sufficiently, upon pain of forfeiting 10*l.*

1521, 16 July. George Browne, alderman, elected in the place of the graceman

<sup>17</sup> *Hist. MSS.*, xiv. App. 8, pp. 25 ff.



of St. Anne's gild, complains that as the plague is reigning in the city he can not get such garments and "honourments" as should be in the pageants of the procession; wherefore it is agreed to borrow a gown of my lady "Powes" for one of the Maries, and the other Mary to be arrayed in the crimson gown of velvet that belongeth to the gild; and the prior of St. Katharine's to be spoken with to have such "honourments" as we have had aforetime.

30 Oct. The foundation of a priest to sing in the church of St. Michael upon the hill . . . with a proviso that the said chaplain shall yearly be ready to help to the preparing and bringing forth of the procession of St. Anne's day, and after Mr. Dighton's decease to be called for ever St. Anne's priest.

31 Dec. (?) Every alderman to make a gown for the kings in the pageant on St. Anne's day, and the Pater Noster play to be played this year.

1539, 18 July. Agreed that St. Anne's gild shall go up on the Sunday next after St. Anne's day in manner and form as it hath been had in time past.

12 Nov. The stuff belonging to St. Anne's gild to be laid in the chapel of the bridge, and the house in which it lieth to be let.

1540, 2 June. Agreed that St. Anne's gild shall go forward as it hath done in times past; that every alderman shall have a gown and a torch, and every sheriff to find a gown, and every occupation to bring forth their pageants according to the old custom, and every occupation that hath their pageants broken to make them ready against that day, on pain of forfeiting 20s.

1542, 10 June. St. Anne's gild to be brought forth the Sunday after St. James' day (St. Anne's day in 1539 and 1547).

On Nov. 14, 1545, the Great Gild made over its lands, tenements, and hereditaments for the relief of the city and its plate on the 5th of February, 1546. On Nov. 5, 1547, jewels, plate, and ornaments belonging to St. Anne's Gild are ordered sold for the use of the common chamber; but that year, 13 June, the procession and sight upon the Sunday next after St. Anne's day shall be brought forth as hath been in times past, and every occupation shall pay to the same as hath been accustomed.

1554, 6 July. Agreed at a Secret Council that St. Anne's gild with Corpus Christi play shall be brought forth and played this year, and that every craft shall bring forth their pageants as hath been accustomed, and all occupations to be contributories as shall be assessed.

1555, 3 June. St. Anne's gild to be brought forth as hath been heretofore accustomed.

To these entries add the following one summarized by Leach, page 224, "Again, on Nov. 12, 31 Henry VII, it was agreed by the Common Council that a large door should be made at the late schoolhouse that the pageants may be sent in, and rent was to be charged for warehousing of 4*d.* for each pageant, 'and Noy schippe 12*d.*'"

There were, therefore, a Corpus Christi play and a procession on St. Anne's day, directed by the mayor and the graceman; the guild priest helped in the preparation of the pageants; the host was carried in the procession; the content, so far as it can be determined, is normal; Noah, a play containing kings, an Ascension and an Assumption and Coronation of the Virgin.<sup>18</sup> In 1555 the order is for "St. Anne's guild and Corpus Christi play." It is altogether probable that the entries in the annals for 1471-2, 1473-4, refer to the same play. The Hegge cycle has the striking quality of possessing elaborate St. Anne's day characteristics and of having

<sup>18</sup> See below.

been at the same time, as it is stated in the Prologue, a Corpus Christi play. Both these plays and the Lincoln plays were apparently regularly acted on Sunday.

The Lincoln plays seem to have been processional, and yet to have been acted, at least in part, upon a fixed stage. We have, on the one hand, the records of the procession, and, on the other, a record which proves that the Assumption of the Virgin was acted in the nave of the cathedral. We possess, moreover, a list of stage properties which may reasonably be believed to have been employed in the Corpus Christi play, and were certainly the properties of a stationary stage. Leach, page 223, gives an entry in this form: "For example, in 1469, one of the Chapter Act Books (A. 2. 36, fol. 32) has a reference to the Show or Play of St. Anne. The Chapter provided for the expenses of J. Hanson, chaplain, about the show (*visum*) of the Assumption of the Virgin on St. Anne's day last past, given in the nave of the church, with a reward to him out of the money coming from the next opening of the high altar, i. e., of the collection box there." And again to quote the same authority, this time following more closely a passage in one of the "act-books or minute-books of the Chapter A. 31, f. 18:" "On Saturday, the Chapter Day, June, 1483, in the high choir of the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Mary of Lincoln, after compline, Sir Dean with his brethren, the Precentor, Chancellor, Treasurer, and Alford standing according to custom before the west door of the choir, and discussing the procession of St. Anne to be made by the citizens of Lincoln on St. Anne's day next, determined that they would have the play or speech (*sermonium*)<sup>19</sup> of the Assumption or Coronation of the Blessed Mary repaired and got ready, and played and shown in the procession aforesaid, as usual in the nave of the said church. The question being raised at whose expense this was to be done: they said at the expense of those who were willing to contribute and give anything to it, and the rest to be met by the common fund and the fabric fund in equal shares, and Sir Treasurer and T. Alford were made surveyors of the work."

This state of things is exactly reflected in the Hegge cycle. The Prologue of the cycle is divided into pageants and the word is freely used in the Prologue. "Pageant" frequently meant the vehicle on which plays were acted and was usually associated with that idea. This Prologue contemplates a regular processional play; but what do we find? We find that the mass of the plays were acted on a fixed stage; so far as we find indications at all. Those which are unmodified and agree with the Prologue may possibly at any time, however late, have been acted on pageants. In two plays pageants were actually employed, namely, in the Noah play, where Noah goes out and

<sup>19</sup> The proper reading is no doubt "seremonium" for "ceremonium"; see Chambers, ii. p. 379.

brings in the ark, and then when the play is over, withdraws with it; and in the Trial of Joseph and Mary where the play begins with the stage-direction: "Hic intrabit pagentum de purgatione Mariae et Joseph."<sup>20</sup> Pageants may have been used in many other parts of the cycle for all you can tell from the manuscript. The cycle is, moreover, divided in the manuscript into separate plays, even when there is no break in the action. Now, why should this have been done? It seems to me that it was done to preserve the identity of these different plays, although they were no longer separate pageants; and that would have been necessary in order to preserve the responsibility of the different trading companies. This responsibility was preserved at Lincoln and thus fulfills the special conditions of the manuscript. The manuscript of the Hegge plays (Brit. Mus. Cotton MS. Vesp. D. viii.) shows the play of the Assumption of the Virgin written in a different hand from the rest of the manuscript, but evidently of about the same date as the other plays; it was incorporated in the manuscript at the time that it was made up. It is numbered and rubricated and even corrected in the hand of the scribe.<sup>21</sup> It was evidently a separate play-book; another case of that is certainly the Passion play in two parts, the first pages of which look as if they had been exposed as outside covers. We evidently have to do with an "original" which has been made up of old and new parts. It is probably an official document analogous to the Corporation Register at York.

There is preserved at the back of a Lincoln Corporation minute-book<sup>22</sup> the following entry of stage properties: 1564, July.—"A note of the perti . . . the properties of the staige . . . played in the moneth of July anno sexto regni, reginae Elizabethae, etc., in the tyme of the mayoralty of Richard Carter, whiche play was then played in Brodgaite in the seid citye, and it was of the storye of Tobias in the Old Testament. First, hell mouth with a neither chap; item, a prison with a coveryng; item, Sara ('s) chambre: lying at Mr. Norton's house in the tenure of William Smart. Item a greate idoll with a clubb; item, a tombe with a coveryng; item, the citie of Jerusalem with towers and pynacles; item, the citie of Raiges with towers and pynacles; item, the citie of Nynyve; item, the King's palace of Nynyve; item, olde Tobyes house; item, the Isralytes house and the neighbures house; item, the Kyngs palace at Laches; remanyng in Saynt Swythunes church. Item, a fyrmament with a fierye clowde and a duble clowde, in the custodye of Thomas Fulbeck, alderman." It has been suggested that some of these properties, if not all, are those of the defunct Corpus Christi play; but be that as it may, it is evident that a number of these properties could have been employed in presenting plays in the Hegge cycle. "Hell mouth with a

<sup>20</sup> Halliwell, pp. 46, 48, 132.

<sup>21</sup> See *Athenaeum*, Aug. 16, 1913, and Mr. W. W. Grey's letter in same periodical Sept. 13, 1913.

<sup>22</sup> *Hist. MSS.*, xiv. App. 8, pp. 57-8.

neither chap," "Jerusalem with towers and pynacles," a "tombe with a coveryng," and a "fyrment with a fierye clowde and a duble clowde," could have been used in presenting the play of the Assumption of the Virgin. In the case of the first three it is not a matter of much significance; but with regard to the last-mentioned strange piece of mechanism it is certainly most significant to find evidence of its use. Before the death of the Virgin Mary she desires to see the Apostles, who are abroad in distant lands; suddenly St. John appears and says:

In Pheso I was prechyng a fer contre ryth,  
And by a whyte clowde I was rapt to these hyllys.

Later all the Apostles suddenly appear; only Peter and Paul speak; Peter says:

In dyveris contreys we prechid of youre sone and his blis,  
In dyveris clowdys eche of us was suddenly curyng;  
And in on were brouth before youre yate here i-wys  
The cause why no man cowde telle of oure comyng.

One further slight point of some value is that the Hegge play of the Assumption of the Virgin makes use of a choir and an organ, as if it were acted in a church.

The suggestion that the plays belonged to Lincoln has been made before, and there are apparent agreements in the matter of dialect and content with what we should expect to find there. The hypothesis explains at a glance many of the perplexities and problems which have involved the cycle. In fact it would be so rare to find in any other place such a set of conditions as those of Lincoln that the identification must gain in credibility the more it is considered. Lincoln was a great ecclesiastical center, and at that place we have a close and intimate connection between the cathedral clergy and the town plays, a set of circumstances which exactly accounts for the remarkable homiletic and apochryphal interest of the Hegge cycle.

In her recent paper, entitled "The Problem of the *Ludus Coventriae*,"<sup>23</sup> Miss M. H. Dodds has also reached the same general conclusion as Miss Swenson's study; namely, that the Prologue represents an earlier cycle which was the foundation of the present *Ludus Coventriae*; but disagrees widely with Miss Swenson's paper when she concludes that we have in *Ludus Coventriae* a composite made up of five cycles from five different places. Miss Swenson's conclusion is that we have to do with one cycle and the changes it has undergone in one place.

<sup>23</sup> *Modern Language Review*, vol. ix., pp. 79 ff.



Arguing from the last stanza of the general Prologue, she makes two statements with regard to the original N. Town plays: (1) That the plays must have been accurately described by the Prologue; (2) that they must have been founded upon stories from the Bible. With the first of these propositions I agree perfectly, and, in general, I agree that the earlier plays were simple and scriptural in their nature; but I find many disagreements with her application of the principles stated.

In the first place, Miss Dodds' study of the relations between Prologue and plays has taken no account of meters, nor of minor differences in incident, and an insufficient account of stage-directions. This leads her to conclude that the play dealing with the girlhood of the Virgin and the Easter play have been incorporated as wholes and not simply combined with old plays on the same subjects, and she makes no attempt to discriminate between old and new elements in these plays. She says that the first seven plays, including the Prophets, belong to the original cycle, but she fails to note the emphasis upon the Virgin both in the Prologue and the play of the Prophets and consequently concludes that all the plays treating the subject of the girlhood of the Virgin (Barrenness of Anna to the Visit to Elizabeth), as well as the stanzas in the Prologue which correspond to them, have been incorporated about 1468 by some compiler who was eager to glorify the Virgin.

The theory that the Prologue has been left intact except in the case of the quatrains numbered fourteen and fifteen, as noted by Miss Swenson above, and that the Girlhood plays are made up of old and new elements can not, I think, be refuted simply by the statement in the Prologue that

Of holy wryth this game xal bene  
And of no fablys be no way.

The people of England in 1468 did not draw a very sharp distinction between those stories which were definitely in the Bible and those generally accepted as "gospel truth" by the Church at large. Such stories as the Betrothal of Mary might be included and accepted as very truth and "no fablys." Miss Dodds also fails to notice the strange mixture of elements in the Easter cycle; although in this case she concludes somewhat inconsistently that the Prologue has been allowed to stand as it was. The play thus incorporated, or, as I think, the play thus rewritten, she would end with the Three Maries. It seemed to Miss Swenson more probable, from a study of meter, stage-directions, and minute differences in incident, and also because the prologue spoken by Contemplacio promises only a Passior. play (not a Resurrection play) that the influence ends with the scene of the Burial.

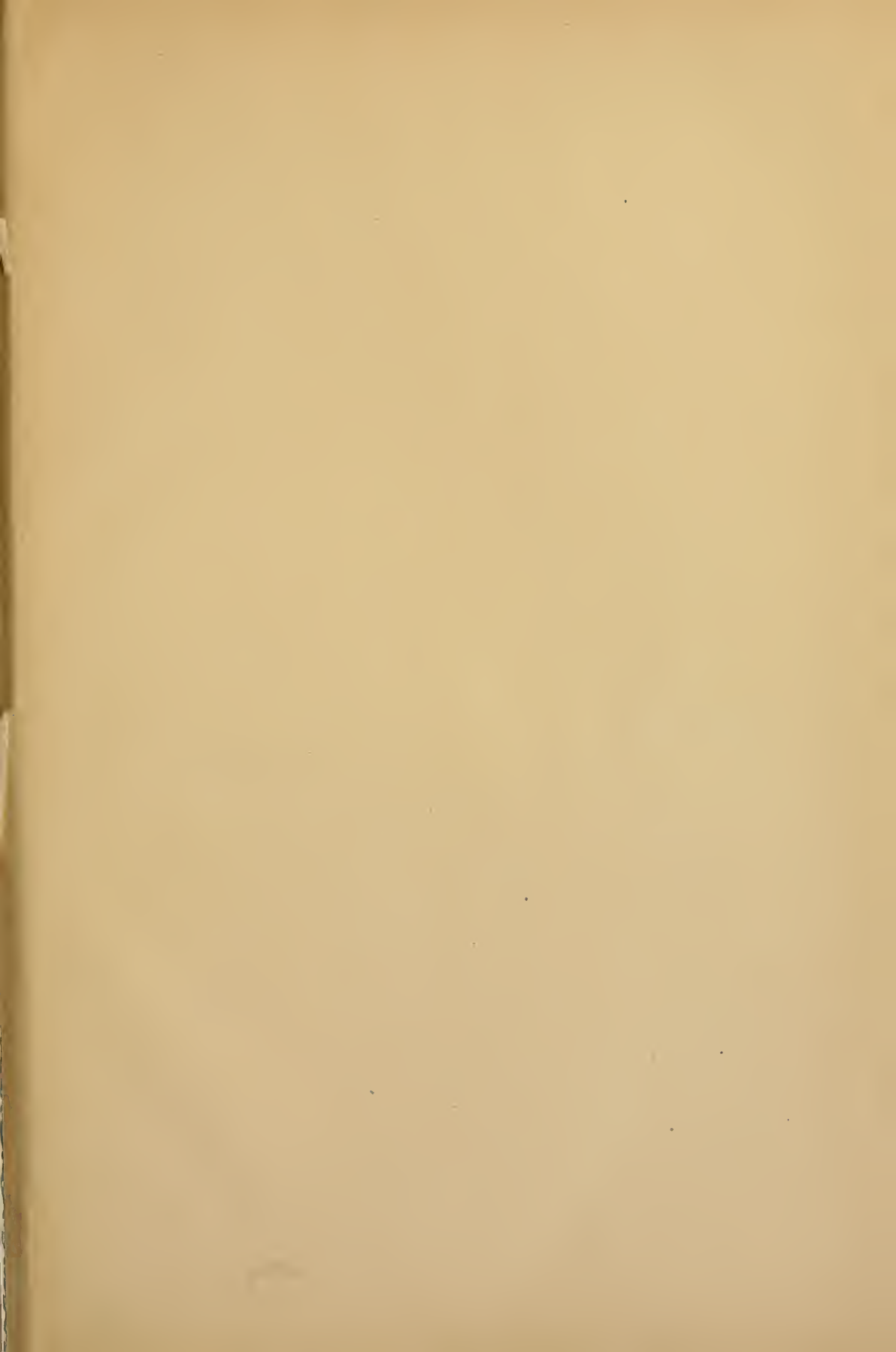
There is, I think, no reason for considering the plays from the Adoration



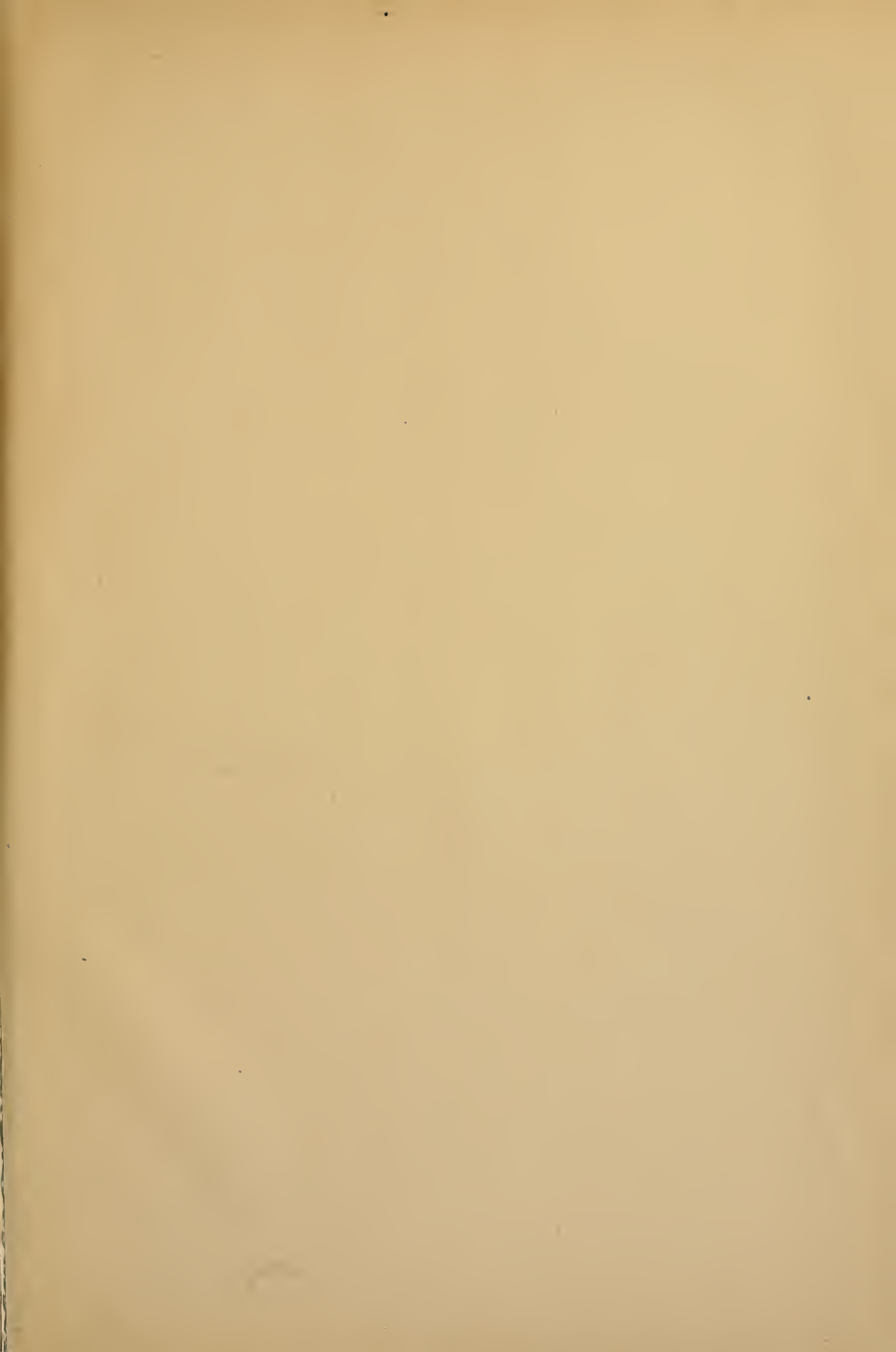
of the Shepherds to the Death of Herod as a separate cycle, as Miss Dodds does. They are not self-consistent in style or independent of the rest of the cycle in style or meter, but seem to be a normal Nativity group. The Purification is evidently from a different source altogether. It is not mentioned in the Prologue and is in a meter rarely used in the cycle; but otherwise the Nativity group has seemed to me to belong with the rest of the cycle. And so I should not agree that any of Miss Dodds' five groups are independent of the cycle or imported from the outside.

There are other significant omissions in Miss Dodds' paper; such as her failure to make note of such excrescences as the Lamech episode, the Cherry-tree episode, and in general the passages written in tumbling meter; also the way in which stage-directions are employed and plays introduced and concluded and many points of disagreement between Prologue and cycle; but these will be sufficiently plain by a comparison of her paper with the preceding one by Miss Swenson.









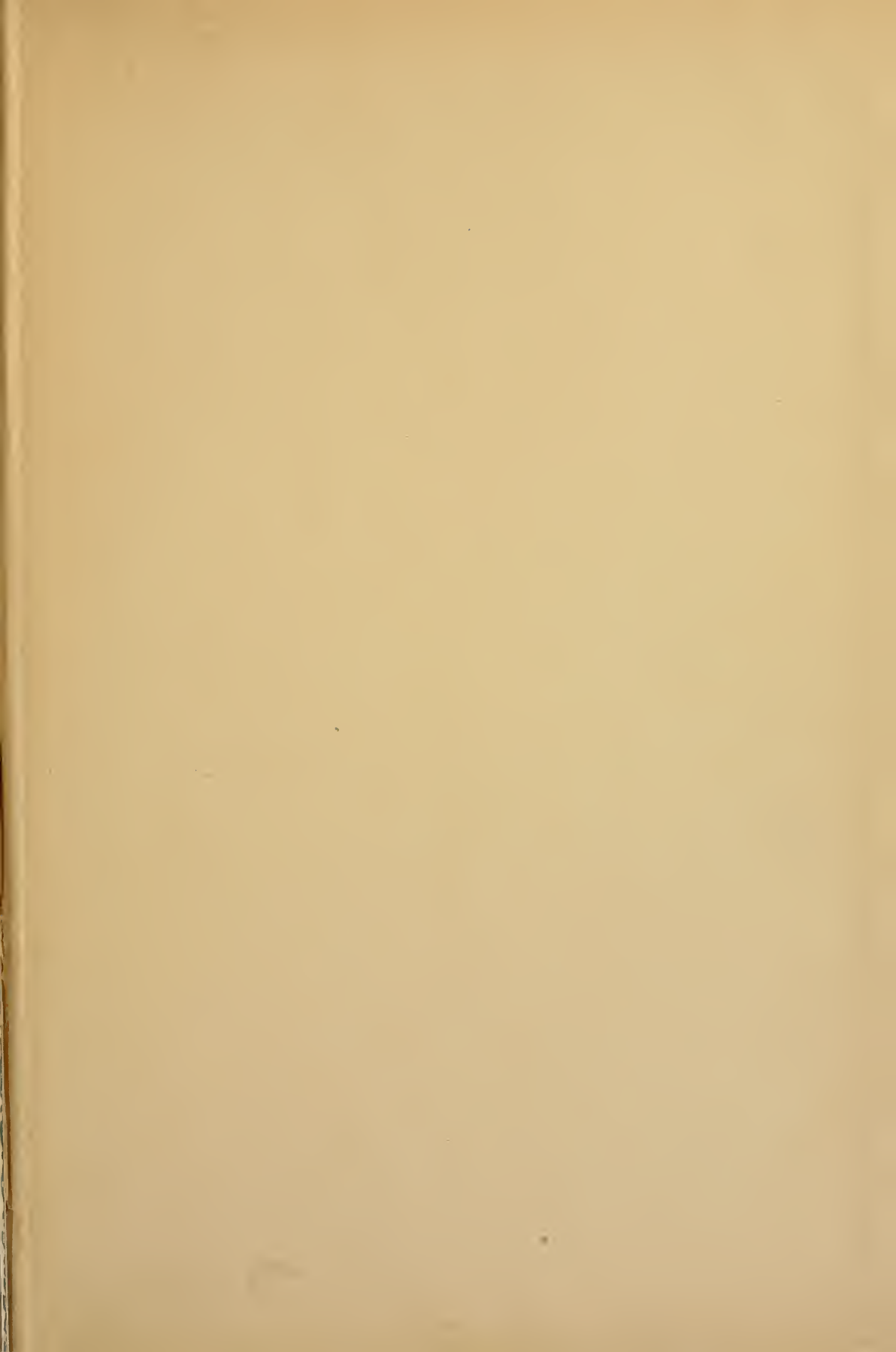


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